SERMONS
UPON
Several Texts
OF
SCRIPTURE.

BY

GEORGE BARKER, B. D.
Sometime Fellow of *Catherine-Hall* in *Cambridge*, and late Rector of *Danby* upon *Wisk*, in *York-shire*.

YORK,
Printed by *John White*, for *Francis Hildyard*, *Richard Manklin*, and *Thomas Baxter* Book-sellers in *York*, 1697.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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The Preface.

THE *Author of these Sermons was a Person of great Learning and Piety, both which he did abundantly manifest, whilest he was for several years Fellow of* Catherine Hall *in the* University *of* Cambridge, *where he was reputed to be one of the most un-wearied Diligence, profound Learning, and Exemplary Piety and Charity of his Time.*

No less esteem had he amongst the Clergy and all that knew him, after he was presented by the University *to the Rectory of* Danby-Wisk *nigh* North-Allerton *in* York-shire, *in the Year* 1659. *Where he continued in such a retired station, as his*

Humility and Contentedneſs of Mind moſt affected, for almoſt twenty five Years, till his laſt Sickneſs, which happened in the beginning of the Year 1684. During his continuance in this place, he always made it his buſineſs, and the Employment of his whole time to promote the Eternall happineſs of all under his care and charge, by a conſtant and diligent performance of all thoſe Duties that a Miniſter owes to his Pariſhioners. And not Regarding either the ſmalleneſs of his Pariſh, or his own eaſe, he Preached continually twice every Lords day; and beſides that, he took all other opportunities of Faſts and Holy-days, to recommend to the People their Duties upon thoſe Occaſions.

There he Preached all the following Sermons, Except only the Fourth, which he Compoſed upon an Extraordinary occaſion, as the Title of it ſhews.

In

In these and all his Sermons he affected such a plainness of Style, & Familiarity of Expression as was most suitable to the Capacities of his Parishioners. And it is to be hoped, that this plainness of his will not be accounted a fault by the Candid Reader, who shall consider that the main end and design of all the Authors *Labours, was not to please the Ears of his Auditors with fine Phrases, and exact Expressions, but fully to Instruct them in the Knowledge, and Affectionately to excite them to the Practice of the great Duties of the Christian Religion. For both which he was Excellently qualified by his great Learning and Skill in all parts of* Divinity, *and by that hearty desire, and ardent Zeal for the welfare and salvation of all Mankind, which was the first Principle of all his actions.*

And as it was the only business of this Authors *whole Life, to do good by his Doctrine*

trine and Example, ſo it is the ſame ſincere Principle that has influenced the Publiſhers of this work, and induced them to expoſe theſe diſcourſes to the World; that ſo the benefits of them might be more Generall, and no longer be confined to thoſe few Relations, that underſtood his way of Writing: And it will be a ſufficient Satisfaction to them, if theſe great Ends, which the AUTHOR *aimed at in his Preaching, be in any meaſure attained by the Publiſhing of theſe his* Poſthumous Sermons. *If the amendment of Mens Lives and Manners be the happy effect of their Reading, what is here heartily deſigned, and humbly recommended for that Purpoſe.*

THE

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St. Matthew, 5. 48.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

IN these words you have two things considerable; their dependance, and their importance. As for their dependance, and coherance, its evident from the particle *therefore*; that they are a conclusion drawn from somewhat premiséd, what ever that be, *q. d.* seeing all that I have lately declared unto you is true, ye ought to look upon it both as your duty and concernment to be perfect. The only doubt is, whether the premises upon which this inference is grounded, be not the whole discourse from the 17. *Verse* to the end, or it be the latter part of the discourse, *Verse* 45, for indeed there is just ground for such an inference from either; its very rational to discourse either way, as thus:

Seeing that the Law which Christ the eternal Son of God came to establish is no imperfect Law, for it does not only regulate the outward, but the inward man also, and consequently its obliging authority and directing efficacy reaches the whole man, as to all his Thoughts, Affections, Words, Carriages, Wayes and Doings, it becomes those who profess subjection to this Law,

not to content themselves with such an imperfect observation of it, as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* took up with; it becomes those who have such an exact rule to direct them, as the *perfect Law*; such an excellent example to excite them as the *perfect God*, to endeavour being perfect as their Heavenly Father is perfect. Or thus, seeing that God whose Children you profess your selves to be, has not only a love for Friends, but Enemies, as doth sufficiently appear in that he expresses it to both, doing *Good to the evill, and Good, &c.* And seeing that to have and express this love, is his perfection, we are every way obliged and Concerned too, as we would please God and resemble our best Father, in that which really is, and by him is reputed, his Chief perfection, to be as he is, and do as he do's, *viz.* Not only to love Friends but Enemies too.

This is the way to be what, every one does naturaly with great vehemency, desire, both for the honour, and the happiness which it brings along with it. Perfect in that, with the highest perfection, which a Creatures utmost capasity can take in; its most soaring ambition can hope for. Now though either of these reasonings be cogent enough, yet the latter seems best to fit the context, and to fall in with the words [*That ye may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven, for he makes his Sun to rise on the evill and on the good, &c.*] *Be ye therefore perfect, &c.*

As to the importance and sence of the words

as they lye intire in themselves, they contain in them.

1*ſt*. An *inſinuation*, that the universall Love which every way demonstrates it selfe to be in God; is the chief Perfection of that God, who is every way perfect.

2*ly*. An *exhortation* unto a great duty, with motives to induce to it, and directions to guide us in it. The duty exhorted to, is to be perfect, that is, to Endeavour after perfection, for that is our work; but to Make us perfect is God's. the motive to perſwade to this duty is becauſe God is perfect, and by coming to be perfect, we shall come to be like him. And this will both Become us, for its a seemely thing for Children to reſemble their Father; and it will Advantage us alſo, for certainly what is the Perfection of the Father in Heaven can be no Diminution to the Children on Earth. The direction to guide in the practiſe of this duty is; in our purſuit after perfection, to take heed we be not deceived with the name without the thing, and that we may not be deceived here, to keep continually in our eye the perfection of God as the Star to ſteer by.

Doct. 1ſt. Vniverſal Love is the Chiefe perfection of God himſelfe. *Chriſt*, when he has once avetred that God *makes his Sun to Riſe on the evil and on the good &c.* makes account that he has fully demonſtrated God to be perfect, and there needs no further proof of this, therefore in ſtead of

proving the point he applyes it, and bids them be perfect as God is. Now Christ discourse would not be coherent, vnless we did suppose that Gods being so good, as to serve both good and bad, with his Sun and raine, was all one with his being perfect. There are indeed in God other excellencyes, there is his *wisdome* wherby he understands all persons and affaires thoroughly, and knowes how to overrule them so as to make them serue his owne ends; Yea even then when they most desire, designe, and endeavour to oppose them, There is his *power* whereby he is able compleatly to effect whatever he intends, without the least help of the creature, in spite of all opposition which can possibly be made either by the whole World or Hell, or both vnited. There is his *Iustice* which makes him to detest all violations of right, by whom soever, so that he will neither do wrong himselfe nor suffer others to do it, if by any ways where it is fit and honourable for him to interpose, he can prevent it. And if by his commands and threats he cannot restraine Sin he will by his Severityes against the Sinner declare that he does not at all approve of it. And all these excellencies are in God in their perfection. Gods *wisdome* is without the least allay of folly, though its observed that there are few great wits in the world but they have some flaw in them, betraying them to imbrace some odd opinions which scarce any in their wits can look upon as the least probable. Gods *power* is not

capable of either being resisted with open force, or evaded by Subtle practies, or wearied by tedious and toylsome exercise of it, for it is all act and every way infinite. Gods *Justice* holds an even ballance, and inclines neither to the rigour of *Severity*, nor to the loosnes of *lenity*; it wholy overlookes persons, and only considers causes, *to render to every man according to his deeds, without respect of persons*. *Romans* 2, 6. 11. Every thing is then in its highest degree, where it is most essential; Thus heat in fire is more Vehement then in Water because in fire it is essential being agreeable unto that essence from which it flowes, and finding nothing within to give the least check unto it; but in water it is accidentall, it com's from without and meets with some thing within which is continually opposing it. Now all these excellencies, as they are originally in God and derived from him into the creatures, like streames which Issue from the fountaine; so they are essentially in God flowing immediately and necessarily from his very nature, and therefore they are all infinite and consequently perfect like this.

Thirdly, these are perfections in God for he would not be a God, *that is*, a being every way the best, if he wanted any of these *excellencyes* or had them not all in the *highest degree*. For the proper notion of a God is such a being as necessarily comprehends in it all kinds and degrees of excellencys. Yet of all excellencyes which are in God if we may be allowed to compare one infi-

nite thing with another, and where every thing is the beſt in its kind to give a preference to one before another; God's Love and goodneſs is the Cheifeſt. Now theſe in God are Vniverſall, not limited to times, places, or perſons; But are extended to eternity, diffuſing themſelves over the whole Vniverſe, *Heaven*, *Earth*, I had allmoſt ſaid *Hell* too, For;

Firſt. They are Naturall to God and Act according to the manner of Naturall Agents, neceſſatily not Arbitrarly, it being naturall unto fire to make hott, wherever it be, it muſt diffuſe heat, though poſſibly it may meet with many bodys which will not receive, and take in, the heat, which is brought unto them. Love is not in God as its ſubject, but it is in God as his very nature; therefore God muſt be always Loving, becauſe *He is Love its ſelfe* 1. *John*, 4. 16. And ſo may as eaſily ceaſe to be God as ceaſe to love, *Indeed* when Scripture ſaith I *will have mercy on whom I will have mercy Rom.* 9. 15. Some might hence conclude that God letts out his Love *Arbitrarily*; So that he might keep it in, if he pleaſed. And its true he might do ſo, if he could be pleaſed to do ſo. But he cannot, there is ſuch a perfect harmony betwixt his will and nature, that what ever his nature is inclined to, his will is ſatiſfied in; *And where the inclinations of his nature, the dictates of his Judgment, and the choice of his will concur, nothing ſhall hinder the workings of mercy towards that perſon*; And therefore where God will have

mercy

mercy the poor Sinner ſhall find mercy.

2dly. They are infinite in God. Indeed all Gods attributes muſt of neceſſity be infinite, becauſe he has them of himſelfe, and its contrary to the nature of every being to ſet bounds unto its owne excellencyes; Nothing therefore has finite excellencies but what has its being from another, who both made it and Limited it, gave it its being and its bounds, Now if Gods Love and goodneſs be Infinite they muſt be Univerſall, becauſe what is Infinite is as great as great can be, and can have nothing greater then its ſelf, but a love and goodneſs which do extend to all are certainly greater then theſe which extend only to ſome few.

Objection. But if God's Love and goodneſs be Univerſall, then it muſt needs work towards all, and if it do ſo then all muſt be benefited by it.

Anſwer, 1ſt. Its true all are benefited by it, for from this love of God, all receive their being, and Life; the conveniencies and comforts of this life, more or leſs, the meanes whereby they may be advanced to, and aſſured of a better, whatever hearts they have to make uſe of theſe means, whatever Wiſdom and grace and comfort any receive in the conſciencious uſe of theſe means.

2dly. That ſome are not more advantaged by this Love and Goodneſs, it is not becauſe this Love and Goodneſs, is a wanting to them, but they are a wanting to it, and their own intereſts. For men are not capable of the higheſt Communications of love and goodneſs till firſt they

be fitted for them, and the fitting for these being a work of Common grace is carried on by such a power, in such a way, as is resistible, for though a Man cannot quicken and save himself; yet without doubt he having *free will enough* to do *evill* he may *destroy* and ruine himself, he may *Resist* that grace which he is obliged and concerned to follow, and which if he did follow, so far as he may, and ought, it would lead him to an higher degree of grace, which would lead him unto happiness.

Object. If God love all, then he must hate none yet the *Scripture* Declares that he hates some, *The covetous the Lord abhors Ps.* 10. 3. *The wicked and him that loves Violence his Soul hates Ps.* 11. 5.

Answ. God while he hates and threatens and punishes them, still loves them, he loves the Person whilest he detests the vice; he loves them as they are his creatures, as they continue what he has made them, and hates them onely as they have marred themselves; and indeed it is Gods love to them which makes him hate them, for he onely hates them as they are enemies to themselves, as well as him; and all Gods threatenings and punishments unto the worst of men, during this life, have a naturall Subserviency to reclaim them from those principles and practises, which are opposite unto their interests, and distructive unto their Souls; God by his Judgments endeavours to imbitter unto them all Sinfull habits

and

and acts, that hereby he may cause them to cast them off with detestation, *saying get ye hence*; If any thing take men off from the pleasure of Sin, it must be feeling the Smart, which it occasions.

And this Universall love and goodness is in God one of his Cheif perfections; we may well count it so, when the *wise God* who knowes how to set a due estimate upon every excellency, does give the precedency to this, Hence.

1*st*, He *delights most in it*, now every one delights most in that which best suits him, and he apprehends most good in; If therefore the all-knowing God be not mistaken in his apprehensions, that must have the *greatest goodness* in it, the enjoyment whereof excites in him the *highest pleasure*. Now its goodness and the exercise of it that God most delights in, and he proclaims it to all that he is for this; *I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness &c. For in these things I delight Jer.* 9. 24. *As if he should Say.* If I have any delight at all (and sure we cannot suppose the ever blessed God to be without that wherein the main of a Christians happiness does consist) it is in such things; This is a noble pleasure which doth not the least unbecome him who is accomplished with the highest excellencies. *Mic.* 7. 18. *He delights in mercy*, mercy is but this love of God exercised towards a sinfull miserable creature, and God delights in mercy, as every thing delights in doing that which is most agreeable to its inclinations, which it is most used to,

and

and does with the greatest ease with the least reluctancy, what it is every way the most perfect in.

2dly. He glories most of it, and truely he is but of a very weak Judgment, who being endowed with many excellencies, pitches upon one of the meanest and lowest to make his boast of, and prizes himself most for that which is of the least worth. When *Moses* had a great desire to see Gods glory, and God was willing to comply with him in this desire, he onely tels him, *Ile make all my goodness pass before thee, Exod.* 33. 19 And God who best knew his own excellencies, and the true value of each, when he had a mind to display them in their greatest lustre, and to become his own Herald in setting forth his most glorious titles, insists upon those most which speaks love and goodness under their different habitudes and opperations *Exod.* 34. 6. *The Lord God merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundent in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving &c.* As Musitians meeting with a pleasant note discant and quaver most on that.

3dly. He is most exercised in it, Love and goodness runs through all Gods providences, which are but a *texture* of *Goodness*, *Wisdom* and *Power*; But that which makes up most of the providence, and is most conspicuous in it, is *goodness*; wheras the wisdom of it is not descernable but by a peircing eye and upon a close veiw. Men are most exercised in that which either they take most

pleasure

pleasure in, it best agreeing with their inclinations, or they expect most glory from, it serving to display their cheif excellency; Now certainly what the most perfect *being* takes greatest pleasure in, must have in it the highest *perfection*, what the most wise *being* Judges matter of the highest Glory, sure has the greatest *worth* in it. *All the paths as well as wayes of the Lord are mercy and truth Ps.* 25. 10. The *Church* takes notice of nothing so much in all Gods providences about her, as his mercy and goodness, *Ps.* 136. 1. 26. *He is good, his mercy endures for ever*, She thought that whatever else there was in providence; there was enough of this, she thought also she could give no higher commendations unto providence, then to say their was much of mercy in it.

View but all Gods works from the begining to the end, his work of Creation, Conservation, Gubernation, Redemption, Sanctification, Glorification, some of which all men are concerned in, and better for, and you shall find a continued vein of goodness run through all.

4*thly*. He does most concerne himself to promote this in the world, Now every thing dos most endeavour to communicate that which it most excells in, thus the fire diffuses its heat, the Sun disperses its light, every thing by generation multiplys its owne peculiar nature. And observe God, and you shall find that it is not so much modes and fashions of Religion, as love and goodness

which

which God most stands upon, These are the essentiall parts of Religion, and the immutable parts, others as they are accidentall so they are various. *Love* is the summ of the Law *Mat.* 22. 39, 40. *Rom.* 13. 9, 10. *owe no Man any thing &c.* Ye have the vast body of the Law epitomized here. Thus *Chymists* can reduce the vertues of Herbs and Mineralls into a very little roome, drawing of the Essences and Spirits, and leaving the gross matter behind. Love is the end of the law, *The end of the law is Charity* 1. *Tim.* 1. 5. This is that which the Law aimes to bring Men too, and when it has once brought Men to this, it has done its work. Love is the great designe of ordinances, what Christ most prayes for. *That they all may be one as thou father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. Joh.* 17. 21. What the Ministers of Christ should most preach up, *Phil.* 2. 1. 2. *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love &c.* And indeed the main edification is in love *Ephe.* 4. 16. *Unto the edifying it selfe in love.* Its also the great designe of providences. Does God carry lovingly to his people it is to teach them to love one another, *Love one another as I have loved you. Joh.* 15. 12. Does he carry angrily towards them, he does but whip them round, to make them kiss one another, falls out with them all, that he may make them agree better among themselves.

If ye ask what peculiar excellency there is in love which gives it the preheminence to all other attributes.

Answer

Answer, 1st. It perfects that in God which is the Cheif faculty in him. In every rationall being there are three Facultys, the *Appetitive Faculty* the will, which carries out to desire what is agreeable to its nature; The *Directive Faculty*, the vnderstanding which both discouers the object which is desirable, and propounds to the Choice the various methods and means whereby the good desired may be attained; And the *executive* faculty, which wants a peculiar name, whereby the methods and means pitcht upon by Choice are applied for the attaining the good desired. Now of these three faculyes the appetitive is the Cheif, it being the spring unto the other two, to set them upon motion, and keeping a hand over them so as to restrain them when it pleases; the Will sits as Queen having the understanding besides it for its Councellour; the executive faculty below it for its Minister to act.

Accordingly, whereas there are three habits to perfect these three facultys, that which perfecteth the Cheif must be the Cheif of them, and consequently *love* which perfects the *will* must have the preheminence of *wisdom*, which perfects the understanding; and of *Power* which perfects the Motive faculty. Now though in God by reason of the purity and simplicity of the Divine nature we cannot so properly distinguish these faculties, yet being found in the Choicest Creatures, and being acknowledged excellencyes in them

them, they cannot be wanting in God himself but must be in him though in a more eminent manner.

2*dly*. It most Clearly distinguishes God from all other beings, every thing is distinguished from all other things by that which is its Choicest perfection. Thus it being the Cheif excellency of man that he is able to take a view of Severall things at once, and to compare one thing with another, and from principles evident in themselves to deduce conclusions which are more obscure, hence he is distinguished from all bruits by this one thing that he is a rationall creature; Thus *Love* being the Cheif perfection of God he is distinguished from all other things by this, that *he is Love*, the best that can be said of any other being is, that it has love.

And as God is the most excellent being in the world, so the Devil is the basest, and the main thing wherein God dos most evidently differ from the Devill, is not either wisdom or power, for the Devil has a great deal of both these, though its true they are but *finite* in him; whereas they are *infinite* in God, but its love and goodness, for there is not the least of these in the *Divell*, and the very want of these makes him a *Divell*, were he not so full of malice and naughtiness as he is, so imutably Settled in these as he is, he would not be what he is, a *Devill*. Nay should it be granted what some of Old have strongly fancyed (though against

all

all reason) that there were two *infinite* beings the one *good*, the other *bad*, the bad would have all other perfections besides goodness equal unto the good, and for want of *this one perfection*, it being the main it would not be God, for God and the Cheife good are all one.

3dly. It has the Soveraigne command of all other excellencies in God. There is nothing but what is excellent in God, and no excellency in him, but what is either a part of his goodness or a Servant to it. *Gods pitty* is but goodness to those in misery, *his mercy*, is but his goodness to those thatare Sinfull, as well as miserable; Nay Gods Justice which Seemes most opposite to his goodness, is but goodness exerting it selfe with vehemency and indignation against that in men and Devils, which most hinders goodness from Communicating it selfe.

As for Gods *wisdome* and *power* these attend on goodness to execute its commands. Wisdome has no other work then to contrive the readiest way to do the most good, and power is wholy imployed in removing those obstacles which hinder the doing of good.

That therefore which do's most sway with God in all his actings, and has so great an influence upon all his attributes, to point them what way to steer, must needs be a very eminent perfection in God.

4thly. The displaying of love and goodness

does

do's most tend to the glorifing of God, I know not whether this do more prove love and goodness to be the *prime perfection* of God or demonstrate why it so.

Absolute Supremacy how highly soever it may be prized by fooliſh and proud men, yet God do's not look upon it as becoming himself, and therefore, though he may pretend to it as Justly as any elſe, yet he Counts it not worth his Claim. When he is Challenged for unrighteousneſs by vnreaſonable perſons, he alleadges not, that he being the greateſt in the world may do what ever he liſt without Controul, or without giving account, but he pleads his own cauſe and ſubmits his providences to the ſevereſt cenſure, of thoſe who have reaſon, and will Judge indifferently, *Ezek.* 18. 25. He accounts it a far greater honour to be reputed a gracious King then a great tyrant. *Wiſdom* though it paſs amongmen for a very choice excellency, as indeed it is, *The excellency of a Man, as a Man* that wherin he does greatly tranſcend brutes, yet if it be ſeperated from *goodneſs* it is a moſt miſcheiuous thing, and though *fool* be looked upon as a great reproach, rendering a man very contemptable, as good to little, yet *knaue* is a greater reproach, rendering a man odious, for it repreſents him as a dangerous perſon, And of all *knaues* the ſubtil knaue is looked upon as the worſt. *Power* is a thing which many are very ambitions of, for they think it a brave

thing

ing, for any to be in a capacity to do what
er they have a mind, none being able to
ppose them, but certainly if a mighty man
e not a good man too, he may be feared, as
evils are in some places, and tyrants every
here, but he shall never be intirely Loved and
ordially honoured.

The onely thing therefore, that does discover
w excellent a being God is, how amiable and
nourable he is, that setts forth his glory unto
e life; and represents him in such a way that e-
ry one is ready to love him, adore him, admire
n, every one according to the *Principle* they
e acted by, such as are *truely gracious in a gra-*
ous way, and such as are still in their naturall
tate, according to the inclinations of naturall
genuity, the dictates of naturall Conscience, I
the only thing which does make the most
ely representation of God, is his carring on
ngs so, that it may evidently appear that he
s no designe upon any, and that he does hear-
y seek the good of all, so far as he may with-
t doing otherwise then is fitting.

2. *Vse For information.*

1*st*. If God be a God of so universall love, and
oodness, then certainly none can Perish utterly,
recoverably, everlastingly, if he can prevent it.

Its true, God is so absolute in his supremacy
at he might do whatever pleases him, with-
ut being in danger of being called to account
y any; he is so mighty in his power that

he might do any thing, which can be done for the salvation of Souls, he is so reaching in his *wisdome*, that if any advantage Offers it selfe, for the reclaiming any from their lusts and Sins, he can seasonably sett in with it, for the improving it to the utmost. And yet it must be acknowledged that some are *ruined* beyond all hope and help, *and will be ruined*, and God does not hinder, not because *he will not*, for were this the reason certainly he would not be a God of that infinite love and goodness which he is taken to be; But because *he cannot*, and yet this impotency of God proceeds not from his weakness, that he is not able to do what is necessary to be done: But from his excellency, that he cannot be *willing* to do any thing which is not *Fitting* to be done, which is contrary to the rules of prudence, Justice, and honour; For it is a thing altogether Unreasonable, that people should be dragged into Heaven, whether they will or no, when they dispise all the glories of it, disgust all the joyes of it, neglect all the means which may bring them thither, resists and stifle all the importunate Perswasions, which the influences of the Spirit, the Power of ordinances, and providences presse them with.

It is very certain, and will be found so at the *Great day*, whatever men fondly conceit in *this their day*, whilest they make things Just, as they would have them, that none do *Perish* but through

through their owne grosse and strange negligence, though none be *Saved* without the infinite mercyes and Almighty power of God.

2*ly*. Then surely animosities and quarrellings, and persecutions can never please God, let them be carried on under what pretence soever, for what is so diametrically opposite to his very nature, can never be gratefull to his will.

Nay to pretend *Religion* for that which is so extremly contrary unto the nature and designe of *Religion*, is an abomination in his sight.

I do not reflect here upon any partyes, upon account of their different opinions, and different practises in ways of *Religion*; for I am of that mind that unless men wink, and suffer themselves to be led blindefold, by one who sees no further then his brethren no better [if so well] there will be variety of Judgments, and wayes. But what need's this alienate affections? Why should this fill with Jealousies and animosities one against another? Why should this whet tongues? And why should this fill hands with Swords, and Clubs, and fagots. Can such practises as these be acceptable to that God, who is the God of love and peace? Can these promote the end of that *Religion* whose precepts, promises, examples, does nims all at love, and Charity? There is one *Religion* which has the impudence to Condemn all *Religions* besides it selfe, and for the most part finds the same measure that it metes out to others, being condemned

ed by all others, and one of the maine things which she is justly blamed for, is that uncharitableness she shewes to all but her self, wherein she is too much followed by the most that Seperate from her.

But let *Religions* pretend never so speciously, so long as the true Nature of God is understood, which is love and goodness, so long as the main designe of *Religion* is understood, which is to advance men unto that frame of Spirit, which is most conspicuous in God, that *Religion* will never be imbraced which ownes any thing contrary unto true love and goodness.

And certainly there is little love shewed unto those persons who, suppose they be in an errour are forthwith sent to Hell to carry their errour with them; And as little love to others who possibly by cruelty may be terrified, but will never be Convinced.

3. *Use. For consolation* to all those who are really interested in God. If God have such a love as extends to all, that are not only Strangers but enemies; what love must he have for those who are intimate friends, his Children? If he has Love for those who are like the Devil, how great love must he have for those who are like himself, that Universall love which God beares to all, if rightly understood, is so far from destroying or undermining his peculiar love to his chosen and Choice ones, that nothing can possibly be found more conducing to establish it.

St. Matthew, 5. 48.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

HAVING dispatched the insinuation viz. that Universall love is the perfection of God himself; who is every way the most Perfect being; I come now to the exhortation, which consists of,

1st. *A duty exhorted*, see to be Perfect that is, to do what in us lies to be so.

2dly, *Motives* to induce unto a conscientious setting about the discharge of this duty, God is Perfect and therefore we should endeavour to be so too.

3dly, *Direction* to guid us in our endeavour after perfection, that we may not be deceived and take up with a false perfection, in stead of a true. Let us rightly understand wherein the Perfection of God lies, and profit after such a Perfection as the divine Perfection is, then when we are Perfect as God is, we shall be Perfect indeed.

Doct. That *it is the duty of Christians to endeavour after Perfection*: Were it not the duty and concernment of Christians thus to do, Christ would neither *command*, *Counsel*, nor *exhort* them

them to it. To be *Perfect*, is to be every way compleat in all the excellencies of a Christian.

1*st*. As to the kinds of these, to have all those excellencyes which a Christian is capable of, he is imperfect who is dificient in any of these Now These are of two Sorts.

1*st*. *Intellectuall*, perfecting the *understanding* whereby the man is made, in the true light clearely and distinctly, to discern all those truths, which are of moment for the bettering the heart and life every way, these truths are various.

1*st*. Such as concerne the *State* wherein we are, so that we may not be mistaken here, Judging our selves to be in the State of grace while we still continue in the state of nature, or in the state of nature, when we have already passed into the State of grace, *This full assurance of understanding*, as the Apostle calls it in *Colos*. 2. 2. Is requisite to compleat a Christian, for where this is wanting their will not be that *Peace of God which passeth all understanding Phil*. 4. 7. *The Joy unspeakable and full of glory*. 1. *Pet*. 1. 8. Which are necessary, both.

2*st*. To unite the heart, freeing it from distracting feares, what to do, and what to expect, which wherever they prevail, hinder a man from being intent upon his main business, of glorifying God and Saving Souls, his own and others.

2*ly*. To satisfy the Heart, that it may not adhere to, or hanker after Vanityes here below, and so be drawen to lay out its time,

strength

strength and parts for the procuring or securing these, and,

3ly. To inlarg the heart, from an ingenious sense of the greatest mercyes received from God unto Sinners, and earnest desires of pleasing and honouring that God, who has already done much; And has given an assurance of doing more. And,

4ly. To strengthen the heart, that the man may have both Courage to grappel with all the difficultyes of actiue and passiue duties, and might to overcome them, being not infeebled by those misgivings of heart, which those who are doubtfull of their state, are Vnavoidably subject to.

2ly. Such as concerne the heart, How to understand it, as to all its principles, whether good or bad, how to observe it, as to all its workings and motions, with their rise and tendency, how to improve it, in Purity from defilements, in liberty from slavery to Sin, the World, and Satan, in life and strength to do and Suffer the whole will of God.

3dly. Such as concerne the life, to bring it unto an Vniversal conformity to, and complyance with the holy righteous and good will of God, Hereunto conduce whatever makes known the nature of Sin, with Sins Vgliness and mischeivousness, The severall instances of duty, as we are brought into severall conditions, and stand in severall relations to God, and man, the

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necessary coincidence of duty with interest, so that what ever we are obliged to, upon any consideration, we are as much concerned about every way, and not onely to be perswaded thus much in generall, but to discerne the particular duty; the prudentiall wayes to be taken according to the varietys of Circumstances, times, Places, and Persons, for discharging duty in so advantagious a manner, so as to bring most Glory to God, most comfort and edification to our selves and brethren.

The cautions to be used in discovering and declining temptations, Least by them we be insnared, seduced out of the way of duty, and drawn unto any Sinfull and distructive Courses.

Of such a Perfection in intellectualls, St. *Paul* speakes 1. *Corrin.* 2. 6. *We speak wisdom among them that are Perfect.*

2ly, Morall such as have a more immediate influence both upon heart and life, to better Both. In the heart are Principally four.

1st. *Purity from all filthy lusts*, whether Devilliſh as Pride and malice, or worldly ambition for the vain applause and honours of the World, and covetousnes after the wealth of the World; or Sensuall Such as carry out after ease and Pleasure, in meats, drinks, recreations and other sensuall delights.

2ly. *Humility*, low thoughts of our selves, not only as finite Creatures who have whatever excellencyes we have, not only originally from

from, but dependently upon another; who gave them at first, limmits them as to their degrees and operations, continues them during his pleasure, can recall them when he will; But also as foolish, feeble, Sinfull creatures; Not knowing how to avoid the Grievous consequences of sin, nor yet how to bear them: being pleased in such mean thoughts, and very well content that others should entertaine the like of us.

3*dly*. *Faith*, I speak not of the first act of faith, which unites the soul unto Christ, and thereby puts in it a Principle of new life, but of those Acts of faith, which proceed from the life already received from Christ, as living upon God, both as to our naturall and spirituall life, and the comforts of both, *above meanes*, when we have them, expecting no advantage by them, to the making the World tolerable, Death acceptable, life fruitfull, heart gracious, conscience peaceable: Further then they are sent in with, by the wise Powerfull and living God. And *without meanes* when God deprives us of these, knowing that the all-sufficient God, is abundantly able in himself to supply whatever is wanting in the creature.

4*thly*. Love to all, God and man, Acquaintance Strangers, Freinds, and Foes, which Love puts us upon serious care and faithfull endeavours to please and honour God, for that is all which he is capable of from us; to promote the solid comfort and real welfare of our brethren, so far as in us Lies.

As

As to the life there are these, 1st. Obedience and readiness to do whatever the Lord requires of us, be it never so displeasing and cross both to our inclinations and interests, never so difficult, putting us to great intention of mind, great toil of body, great expense of estate, never so reproachfull, losing us not only the Favour but the esteem of those whose approbation we most desire, and Exposing us to the contempt and censure of the most.

Then obedience is right when it is Sincere, as to its principle and end; universall, as to its extent; And constant, as to its duration, *Walking in all the Commandments and ordinances, Blameless, Luke, 1. 6. That ye may be Sincere and without Offence till the day of Christ Phil: 1. 10.* Compleat in the whole will of God.

2. Patience, Chearfullness in suffering whatever the Lord lies udon us, without Grudging *inwardly, murmuring or complaining outwardly*, either of our own condition, or against God, and his instruments, be our Condition never so greivous, and tedious. *Strengthened with all might &c, unto all patience Col, 1. 11. Lett patience have its Perfect work. Jam. 1. 4.*

3. *Resignation unto Gods hands*, to be disposed of by him as he pleases, lets him if he will deprive us of all our Comforts, cross us in all our desires, frustrate us of all our hopes, plunge us into all extremity of Sufferings, saying with *Ely its the Lord let him do whatseemes him good 1.*

Sam 3. 18. with David, if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here I am let him do to me as seemeth good unto him 2. Sam. 15. 26. with Hezekiah Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken 2. Kings 20. 19. with St. Paul I am ready not to be bound only but also to die &c. Act. 21. 13. These I refer unto the Life, not that they do not begin at the heart but because they are most conspicuous in the life, whereas the operation of the other is oft more inward.

2ly. As to the degrees of these excellencies; for though these were all found in a Christian, so that he were not wholy defective in any usefull knowledge, humility, Purity, Faith, Love, Obedience, patience, resignedness; Yet were *knowledg* obscure, confuse, doubtfull, ineffectuall in him, were purity partiall, so that it onely freed him from some pollution but not from all, were *humility* in a low degree, so that though he did not greatly affect esteem and applause, yet he could not patiently bear open contempt, reproach and contumelious using; were *faith* so feeble that though it did at last overcome all feares and doubtings, yet this were not till a long time, not without much adoe; were love so Narrow as to confine it self but to some few persons, or partyes, so fickle as upon slight provocations to be Changed into quite another thing, so cold, and feeble, as to put upon doing and suffering little, whereby the good of others might be promoted and

secured;

Secured; were *obedience* partial, that it had not respect to *all God's Commands*; temporary and endured but for a while; only so long as outward advantages allured to it; Formall, having onely the carcase of it, but wanting the Soul of it, *the Heart* servile not out of any Love to God or goodness but either out of hope of reward or fear of Punishment; were *patience* weak that it could bear little, or short-winded that it would not bear long; were resignedness limited to some certaine things, and not extended unto all, so that we could not say without any reserve, proviso, or exception with them, *Acts.* 21. 14. *The will of the Lord be done.* I Say were not all these excellencies in a Christian in the highest degree, that he is capable of; he Would not be a Perfect Christian. *Perfect* indeed in one sense he would be, having essential perfection, or whatever is requisite to make him a true Christian, as a man is a man if he have body and Soul, though as to his body he be never so deformed and defective, and as to his Soul, be be never so depraued in moralls, and intellectuals; but he would not be Perfect as to a graduall Perfection, as a Child is not a Perfect man, though he want none of the integral parts of a man; Nor as to integral Perfection as a man that wants an Eye, or Hand, or Leg, is an Imperfect man.

Quest. But wherein lies the obligation which a Christian is under, to labour after *Perfection*.

Answer

Answer. 1*st*. *He owes this unto God*

1*st*. that we may honour him by being like him, for he is Perfect, then we most really declare the high thoughts which we have of Gods excellencyes, when we Count them worth tranſcribing into our ſelves.

2*ly*. That we may pleaſe him in being conformed to his will, This is the *will of God even our Perfection, as well as our Sanctification* 1. *Theſ*: 4. 3.

3*dly*. That we may obey him; who Sayes *be Perfect* 2. *Cor*. 13. 11. his *Law* being *Perfect Pſal*. 19. 7.

4*thly*. That we may be fitted for ſerving him acceptably; *following him fully as Caleb* did *Numb*. 14. 24. *Readily*, doing and Chearfully ſuffering what ever he calls to, and that with Single hearts.

5*thly*. For enjoying him fully, for God being a Perfect God, we ſhall never be fit for that intimate communion with him, which does Compleat our happineſs, and fulfill the good pleaſure of his will, without we be Perfect too.

2*ly*. *He owes this unto his Brethren*, that he may do them leſs hurt, more good.

1*ſt*. The more Perfect any Chriſtian is, the more earneſtly deſirous, the more ſolicitously carefull, the more unweariedly diligent will he be to do all the good which he has ability and opportunity. For,

2*ly*. The more able will he be to do good.

1st. His Councels will be the more wholsome, more suitable, and more seasonable, the greater prudence he has.

2ly. His example will be the more quickening, edifying, attracting, the more Wisdome, Holiness and righteousnes there is in it.

3dly. His labour will be the more industrious, more unwearied, the greater measure he hath of spirituall life, to prompt him to them, strength to carry him through them;

4thly. His prayers for others will be the more fervent, frequent, prevalent, the more Love there is in him to excite them, the more Faith to encourage them.

5ly. *He owes this unto himselfe*, the more Perfect any Christian is,

1st. The more Serviceable his life will be, he'l have more will, more Power of doing what may promote God's Glory, and mans good, he'l find more encouragements to it, more pleasure in it; Now its a Christians interest to be as Servicable as may be; The more he does for God, or man, the greater is his honour, the sweeter his comfort, the higher will be his reward.

2ly. The more comfortable his Death will be,

1st. He will be every way more fitted for those Joyes, and Glories, which he is entring into, he will have a greater capacity for them, a deeper sence of them.

2ly. He will be more assured of them, reflection upon

upon his life, will give some assurance, when he can say with *Hezekiah he has walked before God in truth and with a perfect heart. Esa:* 38. 3. with St. *Paul I have finished my course* 2. *Timo:* 4. 7. Reflection upon his heart, and the principles there inhering, and working, for he who finds *grace here*, need not doubt of *glory hereafter*; Direct actings of faith, and Love, will incline him to expect confidently good from God, *above all that he can ask or think*, The sealing of the Spirit will make a more discernable impression in a heart more prepared, and the light of the Spirit will give clearer evidence in a more purified heart, and the terrours of Satan will less prevail, where he has less place.

3*ly*. The more glorious his reward in Heaven will be. The more Perfect any one is, the more Capable he will be of Joy, and Glory, as Souls are Widened here, so they shall be filled hereafter. The more Perfect any is the more fitted he will be for Joy, and Glory, for the righteous God does proportion his rewards, and punishments, to the principles, and practises, of persons, so that they *who are better, and do better*, may expect *higher rewards*, those that *are worse, and do worse*, may expect severer punishments.

Qu. But what is perfection then attainable in this Life, ? And if it be not, how can we be obliged in duty, to endeavour a thing not feasible, and to pursue after that, which, when we have done our best, we can never expect to attaine.

Answer.

Answer. 1*st.* If Perfection be at all attainable, whether in this Life, or the other, it suffices, to oblige us to endeavour after it, seeing it is not to be expected without sincere, and diligent endeauours, Now all acknowledge, that Perfection is attainable, *however in the other Life*, and therefore cannot be either on the one hand fruitless, or on the other unnecessary.

2*ly.* Though compleat Perfection, that is, Freedome from all sinfull principles and practises, and the highest measure of grace, both as to the habit and Act which we are capable of, considering the manifold disadvantages which we lie under, *be not to be expected here*, so long as we carry about us such vile bodies, which are Subject to such variety of *impressions, from the Stars, and Elements*, and so long as we are exposed unto *severall temptations, from the World and Satan, on the Right and Left-Hand*; Yet the *foundation* of this is laid here, and as this is more large, or narrow, so proportionable will be the superstructure; The harvest will be according to the sowing.

3*dly.* There is a certaine Perfection attainable here, and therefore St. *Paul* speakes of some as Perfect 1. *Cor.* 2. 6. *We speak wisdom among them that are Perfect*, And reckons himselfe in the Number of them *Phil.* 3. 5. *Let us therefore as many as be Perfect* &c. Though he denys that he has attained compleate Perfection. *Verse.* 12. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already*

lready Perfect; For a Christian is continually rowing till Death, as a man growes greater in l his members till he come to his full stature, nd then he may grow in thicknes, but not in eight, there being a threefold state which a hristian passes through betwixt his first voca-on, and his Glorification, a state of enjoy-ent, where there is much light, life, comfort, nd sensible strength; a state of dissertion, here there is much deadnes darknes, discom-rt And polution experienced, and a state of stitution, wherein the former light, and life, d comfort, is restored, and increased; those ho are arrived unto these states, may be ckoned all among the Perfect, as those who e newly recouered from under a relapse may e said to be come to their Perfect health, ough they be far short of their wonted ength. And in this notion of perfection I derstand the word 1. *Pet.* 5. 10. Where erfection is imediatly consequent to the state of n, and suffering, weakness, *&c.* Unsettledness dissertion, Now of such as are *Perfect* in this nse, *i. e.* Compared with beginners or profici-ts under desertion, there are different attain-ents, so that some have arrived at a higher mea-re of wisdom and Grace, and some at a lower, nd such a *Perfection* as this is attainable here, y those who are faithfull to God and their own ouls, in managing advantages of providences, nd Ordinances, with a subserviency hereunto.

Vse. 1. Is it our duty to seek and press after *Perfection*, then certainly it is our Sin, and our reproach, and should be our greife, that we do so little concerne our selves about *Perfection*, as we do, yea it should be our shame too, when every thing is pressing after *Perfection*. There is nothing in nature, which is at rest, for its aspiring after Perfection, though it spend it selfe by this industrious pursute after Perfection, and expire; As when the herb with much bearing has grown up into a flower it then begins to decline, and wither: shall man only contens himselfe with an Imperfect state, though he be the choicest peice of Gods creation, capable of the highest Perfection, whereunto he is designed, a Perfection, most sublime most durable? When every one endeavours to be Perfect, in the art which he professes, the Councellor, in the Skill of law, the phisician, in the Skill of preserving and restoring health, preventing and Curing deseases. Is it not a shame that a Christian who professes the Skill of vanquishing the World, and Hell, of curing the most desperate deseases of Souls, of heaping up a bank of true Riches, which will never be exhausted to all eternity, that he should not care though he be a bungler in this art of arts. What thoughts do we take, what inquiries do we make, what endeavours do we use, that we may be Perfect? Can we tell what? are we not ashamed they

are

are so few? Were we not at all concerned herein, whether we be Perfect or we be not, the matter were the less weighty, but when it is impossible we should be happy, vnless we be Perfect, and we can never hope to escape the curse of the *Perfect Law*, nor to stand the Judgment of the *Perfect God* any other wayes, is it not palpable folly, nay extreame madness to neglect it?

2*ly*. Is it our duty, to press after Perfection? Let us make it our care, study to excell our selves, excell others, to be every way Perfect, let us make that our business while we live which we shall wish when we come to die, we had made our business.

In order hereunto let us,

1*st*. Endeavour to be sensible of our great imperfection, our extreme want of vsefull knowledge, saveing grace, solid comfort, our unprofitableness under mercies, Judgments, meanes, our awkwardness to carry like Christians, in those various Changes we vndergo.

2*ly*. See the great worth and vse of Perfection, how subservient it is to God's Glory, the good of our selves and others; certainly the most perfect Christians, are every way best fitted for the improvement of all opportunityes of doing, and getting good.

3*dly*. Learn the way to attaine Perfection. Accustome your selves to have mean thoughts of your selves, live up to light, and strength

in obeying God and denying your ſelves. Keep daily in your eye *Perfection*, as the mark to aime at, the goal to run to, Vſe all meanes of Perfection, reading the moſt Spirituall Books, hearing the moſt ſpirituall Preachers converſing with the moſt ſpirituall Perſons;

Decline all hinderances of Perfection, believing that it is not attainable, preſuming ye have already attained it, taking up with Low attainements, diſtracting your minds with cares and endeauours about Religious impertinences.

Pray unto God to Perfect you, its your duty to ſeek Perfecton, God's prerogatiue to give it, when God therefore ſaith *be ye Perfect*, ſay Lord *Perfect* me 1. *Peter*. 5. 10. *Sanctify me throughout*, there are promiſſes of *Perfect* ſubdueing Lusts, *Perfect* compleating graces.

Phill.

Phill: 4. 5.

Let your Moderation be known unto all men.

THE *Phillipians* unto whom *Paul* directs this *Epistle* were then in a suffering condition *Cap.* 1 *v.* 29. But notwithstanding this communion in affliction, there was not that union in affection, which might be expected; He finds use of all his Rhetorick to perswade them to agree together, and Love one another. *Cap.* 2. *Ver.* 3. Notwithstanding, that God by his severest providences did as it were, knock of their fingers from laying hold on earthly things, and called them to higher Enjoyments there were such as would be minding the World still, *Chap* 3. *Ver.* 19. This he cannot mention without tears; Now St. *Paul* being very sensible how dangerous both these distempers were, how distructive to the peace of the Church [without which there can be little mutuall edification] he does what in him lyes, to cure them, To this purpose knowing some differences between *Euodias* and *Syntyche* [two leading Women] and considering that clashing of Parties arises from, and is fomented by the disagreements of Heads, he sets himself most to compose these; 1*st.*

1ſt. He declares how much he Loves them, and how much they are his Joy and Glory, and thereby teaches them how much they ſhould tender one another.

2ly. He conjures them in all Love to ſtand faſt in the *Lord*, and ſo diſcreetly intimates to them that the ground of their jarring is want of keeping cloſe to God, walking in the Spirit.

3ly. He earneſtly intreats them [*Each* One then the other] that they would agree together in matters of *Religion*; And hereby gives them to underſtand that one [whole Judgment in ſuch matters they have no reaſon to diſpiſe] does diſcern more harme in their conceits then poſſibly they themſelves are aware of; [it being a great peice of folly to ſpend ones Zeal, time, Care and diligence in compoſing ſuch differences, which might continue without any prejudice; there never wanting ſome buſineſs of concernment in the Church to employ them about.] He expreſſes a great deal of humble condeſcention in that he lowingly Beſeeches thoſe to agree, whom he might have Strictly Comanded. And thereby gives a Gentle, yet home Check to that pride, which uſually is the ſpring, that gives motion to all diſſention.

4ly. He endeavours to engage others, to Set them on improveing the Intereſt they had in theſe diſſenting perſons. And their prudence to bring them to an accord; He intreats A friend of his, that as he had formerly found him a faith-

full

full Companion in his Labours; He would not now fall him, but assist him in this. He tells him it is their weakeness, that they cannot agree of themselves, desires him to help them he minds him [letting aside this miscarriage] that they were discerning persons; Had laboured with him in the Gospell.

5*thly*. He calls them to such a Christian duty which if rightly practised would swallow up those foolish base stingy principles which are the root of all discord, *Pride*, *peevishness*, *self Love*;

As for the other distemper, which hangs much upon such as have a reall work of grace begun upon their hearts, that they may not give way to it; he minds them that it is a troublesome thing it fills with cares, tells them 'tis a needless thing, they might have what they want and need at an easyer rate, if they would, it is but letting God know what they have use for, and what they desire.

The words are intended as a *comon Antidote against both distempers*, and therefore set in the middle between the more particuler remedyes of each, Where you have.

1*st*. *An intimation of mans Naturall disposition*: he is prone to be eager and Vehement, about matters of Less concernment, while in the mean time he can allow himselfe to be careless And negligent enough about matters of higher worth, greater weight, larger and Lastinger use.

2*ly*. *A tacit Check to this mans Rent*, with a

plain Declaration of a Christian temper; they should not be thus violent, they should be more moderate; So moderate, that all who have any thing to do with them, may take notice of this moderation.

3dly. *A serious Exhortation to the practice of this Duty*, backed and set home with an Argument to perswade the reasonableness of it; *The exhortation is to Labour after a Spirit of Moderation*, And then so far as they attain it, *to express it towards all Men*, tho of different Judgements, ways, enemys such as give the greatest provocations to you, to make you forget what becomes Christians, *The motive is short*, but full; capable of different senses, so as best to suit the Latitude of the Duty; *The Lord is at hand*. You are apt to overprize your own opinions and wayes, to Cry them up, to impose them upon others, to quarrell with those, that will not bow to you, here you are very Zealous, in this you justifye your selves, this you make your glory, but I wish you did understand and consider, that the business of *Religion* is of an higher Nature, then Notions and Observances. It is the getting into Christ, Living in him and to him; And this is attainable sooner then you are aware of; Even now while you are wrangling about these Low things *for the Lord is at hand*, sure whilst you thus hotly contest about your own fancyes, and forget the main and most uncontroverted *Principle of Religion*, [*I mean the forgiving and forbearing*

bearing one another] you little think Who ſtands by, and Who looks on. Know ye that the meek, lowly, holy God, the God of peace ſtands by, *is at hand.* Whileſt you are thus eager in Carking and toiling for the outward ſupply of your life, you little conſider that he who careth for you is at hand, while you are thus hot in purſuing your own vengeance, returning Evill for Evill: You little conſider, you take no notice, that He is nigh, who ſays *Vengeance is mine, leave it to me, I will repay it.*

Doct. Though it be natural for men to be violent in what they ſet about; Yet it is the Duty of Chriſtians to behave themſelves with ſuch moderation. That not onely God, and their own hearts but even the Conſciences of all men may bear witneſs to it. Here are ſeverall things to be ſpoke to.

1*ſt.* What *moderation is.*

2*ly.* About what things it is *converſant.*

3*ly.* How men are to blame in the neglect of it about Theſe things.

4*ly.* Whence this want of *Moderation* proceeds

5*ly.* How it comes to be a Chriſtian Duty to preſs after it, and practiſe it.

1. *As to the Firſt*

Moderation, as here taken, is ſomewhat within; Which does temper, allay, cool, and calm the heat vehemency, violence, boiſtrouſneſs of man's thoughts, deſires, intentions, reſolutions, actions, whereby they Love, chooſe, care for, endeavour

endeavour after, *any thing, person or opinion*; Besides, and be low Christ [If not in and for Christ] More then they should; *Not with that indifferency and resignation they should.*

This ought to have place.

1*st*. in matters of *Religion*, whether opinions or outward observances, which have not such *a necessary connexion with the Spirit of the Gospell, righteousnes and true Holinesse, faith and Love, but without them, those maybe attained.*

2*ly*. *In matters of the World*, such things as tend to promote either a Mans credit amongst men or his outward comfort.

In matters of Religion, men [even such as have some thing of Good in them] ordinarily over shoot themselves,

1*st*. When they cry up their own way as the onely truth, and way of Christ, decrying all other ways either on the one hand, as peices of *Heresies*, and *schisms*; On the other hand as Rags of *Rome*, and *Babylon*; Before they have throughly and impartially considered and compared all; And before they have attained the *wisdom which is from above*; Whereby they might be enabled to discern the nature and designe of *reall Religion*; And to understand, in what place every thing stands, how it tends to promote the true Spirit of *Religion*, or to thwart it, and suppress it.

2*ly*. When they are so far from allowing others calmly to debate and examine the reality and

and righteousness of their principles and practices; That they do not forbear a bitter censuring of all such as lay not so great a stress upon their fancys, as themselves do; Contend not for them with that heat and Eagerness, do not presently *Damn all that say not as they say*. And do not as they do, these must be *Gallio's lukewarm, formall temporizers, Studying to please Men more then God*.

3ly. When they Love to receive and spread reports which tend to the disgrace and reproach of such as differ in Judgment and practice from themselves; *Thinking to gaine more credit to their own way, by throwing Dirt upon Professors of others*. Which is most usuall amongst those who come nearest one another; Are competitors and jostle for preheminence in the Peoples affections.

4ly. When they endeavour to *force people unwilling embracing of them by outward fervour whom they cannot win and perswade to them by clear arguments*.

5ly. When they do *allow* themselves in any *loiterous and tumultuous Courses*. If so be these do but tend to set up their *Party*.

6ly. when they press more upon *People's Consciences*, such *Observances* as they themselves cannot but acknowledge have been omitted by such as *truly feared God, and improved themselves in reall grace*; Nevertheless while they call not at all to the great things of the Gospell, such as *dying to ones self, falling of from*

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the World, *i. e. The Pomps and Vanities of it*; getting into that *Meek, Lowly*, Obedient, *self-denying, Loving Spirit, which is the Distinguishing Character, and Ornament of a Christian.*

7ly. While they decline the Company of such, in whom appears *much of the true Spirit of Religion*; and are really acquainted with the ways and Workings of God upon the Hearts of his choycest ones; merely because they *differ a little, and that Constitutionally* from them in some few small Punctilioes.

8ly. When they do not *quietly Submit* to what is required by Superiours in every thing, where there is no apparent harme.

In these particular Instances of *want of Moderation*; I have dealt very Impartially: Not forbearing one Party more then another, and purposely Declined *meddling* with Superiours, (*Whom we have nothing to doe with*) as well upon *Principles of Conscience, as Prudence.*

Now this want of Moderation proceeds.

1st. From Ignorance of the true *Nature of Religion*; Notwithstanding the high pretences made to *Knowledge of Scripture, or Antiquity.* Religion does not consist in most things contended about: And it may be its designe, might as well be carried on without, as with them.

2ly. From an high conceit of their own knowledge; For notwithstanding this their Ig-

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norance herein, they think that they understand themselves better then others.

3*ly*. From an over-doating upon their own Opinion, *as the Birth of a better Informed Judgment then ordinary*: *And their own too*.

4*ly*. From an Ambitious desire, *to have their Understanding approved, and Applauded by others*, When they really declare they prefer their own Judgments before all others; whilst they conforme to it, Stear themselves by it; Whereas, those who say or do otherwise, do Tacitly condemn them either as weak, or inconsiderative Persons.

5*ly*. From an unaquaintance with *the Life of Religion*, and a grois neglect of the main Duty's of it; to make amends for what they *over do, in the outward Ceremonial part of it*.

6*ly*. From a mistake in the true nature of *Zeale*, *Taking* their own Passions and Headiness in a blind way, for that *regular fervour of Love*, which is directed by a clear understanding, and sober Wisdom in an *Illuminated Mind*: Hearing Zeal commended, they rush into a turbulent motion, while they think to decline *that Luke-warmness, and indifferency, which the Wiseme of the World practise, to save themselves*.

7*ly*. From want of due consideration of the Blindness, and Weakness of Mens minds; Together with the *Obscurity* and *Intricacy* of the matters of *Religion*; which would make one make

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due allowance for their Brothers frailty; And bear more with one anothers mistakes.

8ly. *From an Inexperience in the way*; God ordinarily takes to bring *Conscientious Persons into the knowledge of the Truth*; which he does not all at once, but by degrees; so that one may be ignorant of their Duty, *and erre in many things.*

9ly. From forgetfullness, that they themselves have Erred, and stood in need *of that Toleration, which they refuse to grant to others.*

10ly. From a false perswasion, that any one may *Believe, as he has a mind himself*; which were it true, it wouldprove a fine easy way for avoiding of Suffering, whatever should be imposed; Especially if the Opinion be true; as every one fancyes his own to be.

11ly. From want of observing and considering, the unquestionable good which is in others. *But a modest holding out ones own Apprehensions, affording them the best light, and evidence one has. (Without Reproaching or Censuring, the Person or Opinions of those* of a Contrary perswasion) is ordinarily (for I shall not Determine, what God in an extraordinary way may call unto) the Duty of a Christian. For;

1st. It's most suitable to a Christians Temper, and Spirit; wherein there is all Meekness, Lowliness, Love and Tenderness; which when any Swarve from (whatever it be they do, be it never so good in its self) they do it othere

wise

wise then they ought to do; Now a *meek Person* does Naturally forbear, what meerely tends to provoke others; an *humble Soul* is ready to suspect his own Judgment; And to believe another may understand himself, as well, if not better, in that business than himself; a Loving Heart is very loth to displease, when there is no need.

2*d*. It is an advantagious Representation of Religion to Standers by, that are Strangers to it; Men ordinarily measure not the worth of Religion by the high commendations that are given it, but they observe what *Good* it does, *how it betters them*, makes them of a more truly Noble and generous Spirit then others; Now for those that profess highly Christianity, and that in the Loftiest Strain of it, to manage their differences one with another, with less calmness, than *Physosophers could* do; What a Reproach is this to *Religion*? Is this the way to make it look Lovely? Will this Convert a *Jew* or a *Turk*? Is not this the Drunkards quarrelling about the praises of *peace* and *Sobriety*? It was the challenge of Old, against the *Protestant Religion*, that it bred nothing but Factions and Rebelions.

3*ly*. It is the best way, to bring those that are mistaken, *to the knowledge of the Truth*. Truth would always prevaile, if it was right managed, not held forth *with disadvantage*. *Boisterousness* does give just occasion to others, to suspect that, what is held forth is not truth, since it

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has so little influence upon the Heart, to the purging it from passion: Besides, Men have a prejudice against such as deal roughly with them and cannot easily think they mean them any great good, and therefore expect little from them, and so attend not, however *Scolding is no Argument to convince People they are in an Error*, neither is it the way to bring Men into the Truth to knock it into your heads with Hammers; *Men are men, and must be dealt with as rational Creatures*; if you wou'd perswade them, you must speak to their Reasons, and Consciences, or you may as well hold your Tongue; if you Provoke, you do but *bemist Mens minds*, so that they cannot take in the *cleare Light of your Argument*.

4ly. It is but a due Conforming to the most Universally acknowledged precept of Christ.

1ſt. The cleareſt Rule of Equity in Nature. Christ bids his Diciples *Love one another*; This is granted on all sides; not one amongst the Various Sects of Christian Religion has the Face to deny this; Some indeed do question whether Christ do require of those that profess him, that they should do it by taking up, and tying themselves to any outward observance whatever, and so for other things; yet whileſt those that do go under the Name of *Christians*, differ almost in every thing else; (some or other confidently denying, and that not without very high pretences of Rational and Scripturall grounds,

grounds, what others with as full perſwaſions aſſert, ſome or other ſlighting as a ſuperſtitious invention of man; what others very *Religiouſly* obſerve as an ordinance of Chriſt; how ever all agree in this, that *Chriſtians are bound by Chriſt's precept to Love one another*. Now I am ſure did but people charge their Conſciences more with the diſcharging of this *moſt unqueſtionable duty of Love*, there would be leſs need of calling them ſo much to *Moderation*. For if we do but obſerve the working of that naturall inclination and paſſion, which the World uſually gives the name of Love unto; And withall, do but conſider what a powerfull influence it has upon *Parents, Lovers, Friends*, to the ſweeting even the ſowreſt diſpoſition, towards thoſe they Love; If we mind how many *Diſtempers affection bears with, how many vices it winks at, how many faults it excuſes, how many provocations it puts up and paſſes by*; Can we imagine that the *Love, which is commanded by Chriſt, wrought by the Spirit, and is a very neall participation of the divine nature*, Should come ſo far ſhort of this? Can we think that this more large, noble, pure ſtrong principle, were it indeed in us, would not reſtrain us from quarrelling with one another? Becauſe our Brothers Head is not, as big as ours, becauſe he cannot believe what we call white, is ſo; Untill he ſee it to be ſo with his own eyes; Becauſe he deſires he may not be tyed to our Spectacles, and takes upon him to wear Cloaths not of The

same colour and shape with ours.

And let me tell you some *understanding and conscientious Persons* are of the mind, that when once the Righteous and Alwise God *Shall set up his impartiall Judgment, ask whats the matter, and weigh the severall pretences, at one day he will*, many of those *hot contests* which are kept up amongst Christians with so bitter animosities almost on all sides, will be found able to produce no fairer grounds to Justify their unchristian Janglings, then those Just now mentioned.

You see then that while Christ does expresly command us *to Love one another*, Yea all men, even Enemys, he does *vertually and consequentially* forbid us to use towards any upon any pretence of difference whatsoever such words and carriages as we could never use towards them, did we but Love them, though but with the Love of the World.

Neither must we expect that such a slender *Plea at a pretence that it is in the cause of God and Religion*, will serve our turne to Justify us in the sight of God, for a breach of the highest and most undoubted law of Christ: any more then the *Pharisees, Crying R's Corban* could excuse them while they refused to supply the necessities of their *poor Parents*.

Nay rather it will be an agravation of our Sin, while we *Patronize* it upon God, and make *Religion* a Sanctuary for wickedness.

To oppress is a great iniquity, but to plead for

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and *Justify oppressions* because hereby we are enabled to give alms, to build hospitalls, this is an higher abomination, it is *Offering unto God, swines blood and bringing the hire of an Harlot into the Temple.*

5*ly.* It is a doing that which even the Common light of nature calls for, this is acknowledged even amongst the Heathens as one of the Cleareſt and certaineſt rules of right, that *every one ſhould doe as they themſelves would be don to*, this our Saviour Commands, *Matt.* 7. 12.

Now look a little into your owne hearts, ask your ſelves, *would I willingly, were I in a miſtake, be Derided for it, upbraided with it, Perſecuted for it, ſhould I not Judge it more reaſonable, that others ſhould pitty me, endeavour to convince me*, Suppoſing the Errour to be dangerous; Does not the greateſt damage accrew to my ſelfe thereby.

And what because I am blinde and have loſt my way, muſt I therfore be Spit on, Trampled on, abuſed; Because I am not ſo happy as others in finding out the truth; Muſt I therfore be made more miſerable then I am; Becauſe God has left me to *mine own ignorance and darkneſs*, muſt man *add affliction to affliction?*

6*ly.* To do otherwiſe is but to miſimploy that Heat, Vigour, Vehemency, which God has put into us, unto another uſe then God intended it; For God intended this *Zeale* for the conſumeing of our owne Luſts, not the ſingeing, ſmutting of our Brothers Name, this fire in us was made to warm our Neighbours, not to ſcorch and Burne

them, and shall we make no better reckoning of Gods gifts then to wast and abuse them: Do our selves and others harm by that which God ment for both our Goods; may not this prouoke God to keep his mercys to himself, and not put them into Childrens hands to Cut their own Fingers and to Slash their Neighbours with.

7ly. It is an unreasonable thing to be more Severe in smaller Crimes, then we allow our selves to be in greater.

Let a man distemper his body, besott his parts, wast his Estate, squander away his precious time, undo his Wife and Children, venture his Soul in swilling, and drinking; we bear with him, let him waist his strength, flur his Reputation, disgrace his Relationes in Lewdness and Wantoness we bear with him still, do we shun their company as we would do the Plague, and cry out with them out of the World.

But let a *poor honest Soul* while he is *Sincere and earnest in the pursute after truth*, But stumble into an Errour, or what is accounted so, we presently Cry *Heretick*, oh take heed of him, Come not neare him, it is not fit such an one should breath, *crucifie him.*

Why what evil hath he done? Whats the matter? *Why him* rather then the other?

1st. Is an Errour more Infectious, and catching; I am sure there are many that do not so much suite and gratify our Corrupt inclinations as these Lusts do; Nay some there are that exceedingly

exceedingly thwart Mans naturall Bent, most oft-times bring them into contempt; reproach, outward sufferings; And here I believe the *naturall Self-Love* which is in most, will make them wary before they engage.

2*ly*. But it may be, its more dangerous if it should take.

Indeed 'tis possible such it may be, as a mistake in the way may hinder one more in their reaching their Journeys end, then a fall or two.

But as there are many useless truths so many innocent Errours, all the harme they do, is but to the Persons themselves; And these rather expose to outward trouble (which God oft times sanctifies to them for the good of their Souls) then incline or encourage to Sin or hinder the work of holiness in their hearts, do they not walk as closely with God, grow as much in Spirituallity, Heavenly mindedness, in reall and solid Grace, (notwithstanding their mistakes,) as others with all their Orthodoxe knowledge.

And let me tell you God will one day enquire, not how ingenious we have been in our *Religion*, but how sincere, diligent, faithfull; not what our opinions have been, but our graces, not how we have talked, but how we have lived.

3*ly*. What then, is it a greater Sin to Live in a mistake then to Live in Drunkeness, Whoredome, Profaneness; possibly I might thinke so too, could I be perswaded that a mistake does more harme to Souls, is less Consistant with

Sincerity and honesty, is more contrary to the Spirit of Piety and Holyneſs, layes more block in the way to Love, Meekneſs, Lowlineſs, reſignation, faith, indiſpoſes more to obedience and ſelf denyal.

But untill I can meet with ſome *Sober Conſciencious Perſons* who are given to theſe, and think they ought to be ſo, perſwade themſelves they are pleaſing and ſerving God in the mean time, as I do meet with ſeverall, whom I have reaſon to look upon as very Conſciencious in their miſtake, untill I find Drunken and Profain Perſons notwithſtanding their Drunkenneſs and Profaneneſs growing in Grace (as I find ſome Erroneous perſons notwithſtanding their errour) give me leave to queſtion whether this be the greater Sin or noe.

4*ly*. But it may be is an harder Task to forbeare thoſe Sins then to avoid erring, there being ſo many temptations to entice us to them, ſo great a Suitableneſs in our nature to them.

But do's not the Love we bear to our Credits, Eſtates, Healths, Relations, Souls, bid us refrain; do's not Conſcience, Reaſon, Scripture, Check us for them? Would not naturall principles carry us above theſe? When alaſs how eaſy a thing is it to miſtake? Even then when we are moſt deſirous to find the truth, moſt carefull in ſeeking after it, How Blind, Dark, Narrow, Shallow are our underſtandings? How many prejudices do we take in from our very Child-

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ood? How obscure, and dubious is Scripture, *when read without the light of God?* How vain ncertain *are the dictates and Creeds of Synods,* ouncells; *Churches?* How little concerned do's *God look upon himself to secure his People from those* istakes *which he knows how to do them good by?* How apt to be swayed with the opinion of those ve have an Esteem for. If we consider but these nd the like occasions of mistake, which every ne almost is surrounded with. We shall find ause enough to conclude that one *May easily* r *without any great wilfulness* Gal. 6. 1. 2. 3. 4. Col. 3. 12. 13. *Phil.* 2. 1.

Use. 1st Then as we would approve our selves worthy of that Name we have taken upon us; Let us carry our selves with that moderation that becoms Christians, towards those that differ *either in Opinions or Observances from us.*

1st. Let us *not willingly enrage the Ignorant against them* by giving them those Nicknames which the violence of their Adversarys has branded them with.

2dly. Let us not make a worse representation of their Opinions to others, then they deserve, by loading them with those odious consequences which they themselves do as much disown and abominate as we do, these two practices the Devil, the Author of confusion has found very Vsefull to him, for the keeping strife on foot in the Christian World.

1st. Consider how *Christ* behaved himself to

his Ignorant and Erronious Disciples, he dos not upbraid them with it, quarrells not with them about it, but quietly beares with them, waits his opportunity further to instruct them, better to informe them. And

2ly. This was the Apostles practice, for the Composing of those many Differences of those Times between the *Jewish* and *Gentile* Christians; They do not *magisterially dictate* this is truth, and who ever thinks or sayes otherwise are Hereticks. No they leave it to the freedome of their Auditors to *observe Jewish* Ordinances or *let them alone*, and all their diligence and care is to bring Christians to a mutuall toleration one of another, so as to overlook those petty differences, and not withstanding them to *strive together for the faith of the Gospell, to help one another in the way to Heaven* Rom. 14. *Phil.* 3. 16.

3ly. Vntill that primitive practice of undervaluing Smaller differences, bearing with one another in them, and laying the *maine stress* upon the *great things of the Gospell, Obedience, Self-denyal, Faith, Love*, be revived, I shall wish Peace and Truth may much flourish amongst us, but truely I shall not much hope for it.

4ly. Were there but more of a Gospell Spirit in the World, were but People come to that, to see and be ashamed and loath themselves in their own sight, there Would not be such spying *motes in their brothers eye*, there would be more shewing meekness to all Persons considering

they

they themselves were sometimes Foolish and deceived. Tit. 3. 3. And,

5/y. If God should bring good people under the lash again, I wish it may make them make a serious and impartiall reflection upon their former Carriages and with *Josephs Brethren*, when they found harsh usage from *Joseph*, enquire whether this be not the just Punishment of their rigour and severity towards their Brethren. *Gen.* 42. 21. It being a Righteous thing with God, to mete out to any the same measure, they have meted out to others.

6/y. How knowest thou but that allowance thou art so backward in making to thy Brother thou standest in more need he should make to thee.

Art thou sure he is in the wrong, thou in the right, how knowest thou this? thou thinkest thy self in the right, so do's he.

Thou art confident, it may be, so is he, Thou producest *Reason and Scripture*, so do's he, thou alledgest the consent of such and such learned and good Men, whom thou greatly accountst of, he do's no less.

Hast thou studyed and prayed for the finding out of the truth? he has done so too.

Hast thou suffered in Testimony to what thou Judgest truth? If he have not done so, thou knowest not but he may be ready to do the like when God calls him to it.

Obj. Why, but it is a *dangerous Errour.*

Answer

Answer. How knowest thou it is? Canst thou shew wherein the danger of it lyes?

2ly. Grant it be so, thou hast more need to *pitty* him, then to *quarrel* with him, thou hast more need to deal with him so as thou mayest best hope to bring *him out of his Errour*, Thou oughtest to take care least by thy passionate and untoward management of the Cause of Truth, thou give people occasion so to loth it, that they Chuse rather to fall in with the others errours.

Que. But would you not have us to be *Zealous*.

Answer. Yes as *Zealous* as you will, but I would first have you to understand what for, I would not have you to run without your Errand; as *Zealous* as you will, but I would have you remember that venting of *Pride* and *peevishness* in *Religion*; Loving and admiring and violently propagating your Opinions and ways, is not *Zeal*.

As *Zealous* as you will, but first let *Zeal* begin at Home, let it burne up *your Pride, and Earthlinesse, and frowardness*, and then when this Smoke is gone, the light of it will serve you to guide the heat of it by.

Alass Men talk much of *Zeal*, but there is less *true Zeal* in the World then there is *true Love*, there is as much want of *Zeal*, as Vse of it, and it must first be got, before exercised and put forth, the same spirit enclines to *Moderation* that Enclines to *Zeal*.

Vse. 2. Labour for a Spirit of *Moderation*. A

meek

meek lowly and tender Spirit, Its hard practising a Duty when it thwarts Nature, this is a lovely *God like Spirit*, were it not for this, in what a sad case were we who hourly try Gods patience by greater provocations then mistakes amount to.

Use. 3. Condemn not any for putting that Duty in practise which you allow your selves in the neglect of.

If you will not be moderate your selves, be not angry with those who in Conscience to God desire to be so, stain them not with odious Names.

Use. 4. Whatever ill usage thou meetest with from the World, be not discouraged in the due practise of *Moderation*.

Consider it is thy Duty, and though Men may reproach and Curse thee for it, the blessing of *a peace maker* shall be upon thee from the God of Heaven.

I know such is the madness of the World, they are ready to quarrell with every one that will not engage with them in their Contentions one against another, and he that goes about to part Two opposite Parties, provokes both against himself, and seldom goes away without blows from either.

But count it no new and strange thing to be used as the Men of God have been used before thee, Continue thou in Gods work still, and he will answer the damage that accrues thereby to thee.

Use. 5. Judge those the best Christians who being Conscientious in all other dutys, do not neglect this.

If

It shews a Christian Spirit, it is an Argument of the *wisdome* from above, *which is pure & peaceable.*

6ly. See thou hast more Cause of *humbling* thy selfe then *Glorying*, If thou hast neglected *Moderation*, thou hast omitted a Duty; deceive not thy selfe, nor vainly hope to delude God, by putting a good Name upon a bad practise, and Calling that *Zeal*, which God Counts *Hellish Fury.*

7ly. Conclude not there is most of Religion in such as seem the eagerest, all violent heats speaks not so much strength of Nature, as the oppression of some Distemper. Let not any by Sin gain the reputation of being more then ordinarily Pious.

8ly. Learn the Wisdome and Justice of true *Religion* which requires such practises from its professors as tend most to promote and secure, what all generally desire, and *that in peace*, to obviate the Slanders cast upon it, by the worldly wise, that it disturbs society. But,

9ly. A Christian ought to be *moderate about the Contentments of this Life*, the Comforts and conveniencys, Health, Wealth and Credit, Lovers and Friends, *&c.*

In these people are then *immoderate*, when they let out their *Affections* too much upon any of these, giving them a greater share in their hearts, then of right belongs to them.

That we love these at all, is no fault, they

being

being the good Creatures of God; But that we love them otherwise then we should, more then we should, here is the *Immoderation.* As,

1*st.* When we love them more then God himselfe, the Gift more then the Giver, whatever it be in any Creature comfort whatsoever that we find any savour and relish in, any chearing and warmth by: It is but a drop, a spark, a ray of that goodness which is in God, and is used by God as a bare to allure us to himselfe, *In whom alone the Fountain is to be found, who alone is able not onely to content but satisfye us.*

Now then we love these more then God, when,

1*st.* We take more care and paines to procure these to our selves, then to win the favour of God.

2*ly.* To secure these more, then we do the Love of God,

3*ly.* When we can be quiet without God, while we have these, let God hide his face, forbeare his visits, withdraw his directions and Consolations, no matter for all this, provided Health lasts, Mony comes in, the World gives us its good word, and Freinds their smiles.

4*ly.* When God himself cannot please us without these, let him reason the case with us as *Elkana* with *Hannah, am not I better to thee then ten earthly comforts.* Our hearts are so hardned in sorrow for being deprived of these we mind him not, but go on grieving and fretting still,

3ly. When we will not give God leave to deny us these, to Strip us of these, as he shall Judge it meet, but we will either have our own will in these, or we repine at him, quarrel with him, take no care to please or serve him. But

2ly. We are then immoderate when we love these more then Grace, which (being the Life, Health, Strength, Beauty of the Soul; a Divine participation and resemblance, a reall Substantiall, Solid, Lasting Good,) Is of greater worth, much more desirable. As,

1ſt. When we Grieve more deeply for our want or losse of these, then we do for our weakness or decay of Grace: It's a trouble to us that we have not some outward comfort we formerly had, or at least hoped for, and still very much desire; This checks our jolity, breaks our Sleep, takes us off our Meat, changes our Colour, plumpness, and Strength; but we can grow dead and Cold, and Faint, as to the Bent of our Souls, the workings of our Hearts in those pure Spirituall, Heavenly delights, and longings after the Spirit of holiness and goodness, and yet be as jocund as ever; Savour as much the Comforts of this Life as ever; We can devert our selves with company and worldly business, &c.

2ly. When we are more studying and toiling, beating our Braines, and tireing our Bodies, laying designes and pursuing them, with all seriousness, diligence and indefatigableness, for the getting

getting of some outward comfort our hearts are set on, then for the getting of Grace, growing in the Life, Strength and Vigour of it, bringing forth the Fruits of it. When for the recovering of the health of our Bodies, encreasing our Estates, the Scruing our selves into the favour of some particular Persons, the heightening of our Reputations, we count no Care, no Industry to much, we spare no paines, we are prodigall enough of our time, leaving no Friend un-consulted, noe interest unimproved; But let the Soul be never so Sick, famished for the word of Life; Impoverished of the true Riches, we can sit still, as Persons not concern'd, trouble no body with such Idle questions, *a how we may get our Souls saved*; we can content our selves with *any Sermons*, though they never come home to our Consciences; spend Sabbaths after Sabbaths, in vaine discourses, sports, &c.

3*ly*. When we are more glad of these outward Comforts, finding our selves growing more Healthfull, Strong, Wealthy, more in favour with the *world*, &c. Then when we find good desires more strong, more frequent, our Souls getting ground upon Lust, getting Victory over the *world*.

4*ly*. When we had rather *part with the means of Grace* then with any *outward Comfort*. Rather then abridge our selves any thing of our ease or pleasure, or at the least hinder our profit, we will have no Reading of the Bible, no

Preaching

Preaching, we will not be disturbed by Meditation, &c.

5ly. When we can pray more heartily for theſe, ſeaſonable Weather, a good Crop, eaſe of Taxes, Peace, &c. Then for Meekneſs, Lowlineſs, Love, &c.

6ly. When we are more thankfull to thoſe that endeavour to ſupply us with outward Conveniences, then to thoſe who by their example and Councel, Exhortations and Reproofs, endeavour to bring our Souls into a ſenſe of their poverty and miſery, to a reliſh of pure truth, to the Life of reall Grace.

7ly. When we are more angry at thoſe that hinder us from getting that outward comfort, which we have moſt mind to, then we are with thoſe, who by their company or example, make our Spirits more dull or flat, more dead and cold, more formall and Carnal, leſs to prize, reliſh, and ſeek after Holineſs and Heavenly mindedneſs.

8ly. When in diſpoſing our Selves or Relations in the World, as to Callings, Services, or Marriags; we more conſider what probably may be for their outward eaſe, Pleaſure and Preferment, then for the good of their Souls, for the Begetting, Cheriſhing, Increaſing and Strengthening of grace in them. But

3ly. *When we love theſe more then duty, &c.*

1ly. When God calls us to ſomething elſe, Praying, Reading, Hearing, Meditating, &c.

We

We chuse rather to be pleasing our selves in the use of these outward Comforts.

2ly. When we will commit Sin rather then lose any of these. It may be our Consciences are perswaded, that such practises are sinfull: Rather then we will venture our Liberties or Estates, we will do them howsoever, before our Consciences are throughly convinced, they were in a mistake before.

3ly. When for the Attaining of any of these things our hearts hanker after, we will be induced to do any thing which ought not to be done, which may bring reproach upon *Religion* and the name of God, such as fraud, injustice for getting of Estates; and when we quarrel with those that stand in our way.

4ly. When our hearts are so upon these, that we cannot be without them, all our Comforts gone here we be Crossed; when we Count life it self not worth the having upon these terms, if we have not what we desire, or lose what we love, we throw up all. Thus being brought under the Power of them, we have not them but they us.

That People are prone to be *Immoderate* appears.

1st. That even *good People*, who might be presumed to be free from this distemper (if any at all) are yet recorded to have been to blame this way. *Rachel* because she had no Child falls a quarrelling with her Husband and

will needs go die, *Gen.* 30. 1. *Jacob* having lost *one Son of Twelve*, What a deal adoe he keeps, will not be comforted; He will live no longer. *Gen.* 37. 34. 35. *Hannah* though she had a very kind Husband, yet because she wanted a Child and is upbraided with it by her Rivall, will not Eat, 1 *Sam.* 1. 7. *David* for the loss of a Rebellious Son, who had usurped upon him, how is he moved? What passionate expressions useth he? How unmindfull is he of the late deliverance? 2 *Sam.* 18. 33. *Job* because he may not have his health and ease, will needs throw away his Life too, *Job.* 6. 9. *Baruch* because frustrated of his expectation of wordly greatness, what Sorrow, Sighing, Fainting, Restleness do we hear of? *Jer:* 45. 3. 5. *If Jonah* lose his *Credit* and be counted a *False Prophet* for denouncing that destruction against *Nineveh* which was prevented, he'l not be obliged to God for his Life; in pet he'l bid him take that too, *Joh.* 4. 3. If the *Gourd* that shaded him Wither: He will *live* no longer. No, death *is a great deal Better*, v. 8.

2*ly*. Let us but all make an impartiall Survey each of our selves, 'tis to be feared we shall find how we do over prize these things, and dote upon them. We need seek for no other proofe to Convince us there is such a proneness in Man to be *Immoderate*, then that we find in our selves. This proceeds,

1*st*. From that *great Suitableness* betwixt these

Lower

lower Comforts and our naturall inclinations, hence these things become so pleasing to us.

2*ly*. From the want of an *inward principle* to give a Check unto our naturall inclinations, and to put in us a new bent. Men in their unregenerate state have only Conscience to bridle them, which only shews them they ought not so much to indulge themselves in these lower delights, but endowes them not with a principle, spirit, Nature, which disgusts these and hungers and thirsts after some thing else, which is better and higher.

Those that have a new nature begun in them; Oft this is faint and weak, wants its sense and Palate, Sleepy Dull, so that it is within indeed but Acts not.

3*ly*. From *ignorance* of the vanity and vexation which is in all these things, which only we come to understand indeed, when we throughly experience.

4*ly*. *Unacquaintance* with that which has more reality, solidity, suitableness, Lastingness in it. We know no better comforts: we have had a view of no rarer beauties, no tasts of Sweeter delights, therefore we admire these.

5*ly*. Ill *Example*, we heare those that abound in these Comforts Cryed up by the Vogue of the world for blessed men. We see men reputed wise, Eagerly striving for these, good men troubled they have no more of these.

6*ly*. *Neatness of temptation*. These we meet with

with every where and that continually, and they steal away our hearts before ever we are aware.

7ly. *The Devils Malice and Subtilty*, who makes use of these to ensnare our Souls by, and thereby to keep us from Looking after some what better. Hence he uses all his Rhetorick to woe us for these.

8ly. *No Convictions of the Sinfulness* That is in Letting our Affection run loose after these things.

9ly. *No Consideration of the Danger* that thereby we run our poor Souls upon.

But yet *Moderation is a duty* for.

1st. It is *Commanded* 1. *Joh.* 2. 15. 1. *Pet.* 2. 11. 1. *Cor.* 7. 29. 30. 31. 1. Thes 4. 13. *Matt.* 6. 23. 19.

2ly. It is *Practiced* by *Agur a good man* then when he sets himself most in the sight of God, when its presumed he Composes himself so that he may best please God. *Prov.* 30. 8. 9.

3ly. *Immoderation* is prayed against by an understanding person, *Psal.* 119. 36. 37.

The good of *Moderation* appears in the evil of *Immoderation* which is.

1st. A Contradiction to a *Christian frame*, so far as any is a Christian he is in Love with God, which is Inconsistant with the Love of the World, one fire eats out another, he is Holy.

Now what is *Holiness* but a Weanedness from the World, the lusts whereof defile the Soul,

His Conversation is in Heaven. There is his Treasure, that way is his Love, his Hopes, his thoughts. He is wholy resigned up unto God, saying from the heart *thy will be done*, therefore not choosing this or that for himself. He delights himself in the Lord above Lower Comforts, Trusts in him leans not upon these Lower Confidences, he is Called out of the World, Crucified unto it, of another Spirit then worldly men, his heart is not sett on the same things with them.

2*ly.* Tis a worme unto *his Grace*; While this is in any allowed of, it Eats out all the life, strength, Vigour of the pure, innocent, meek, lowly Nature, draws the sap of the Soul another way, Love of, and care about these things Choake.

3*ly.* Its An Hinderer of a *Christian progress* while his heart is set upon any thing here below his parts and time his thoughts and endeavours, his care and industry, which should be lay'd out for the improving of the Stock of Grace which one has, will be Spent in pursuing what our lusts Call for. The sense of our inward wants will be lost, the Hunger and thirst of the Soul after Perfection will be quenched. Airy Notions and empty formes will be hugged, and prized, and wrangled about: The Word takes no hold on the Man while his Mind workes Another way.

4*ly.* Its An interrupter *of his duty*, when he should be setting about something which may

be for his own, or his brothers Real advantage, he is called by some inordinate Desire to go about some thing else.

5ly. A Disturber *of his quiet*, he cannot be at Rest, unless he have some thing which God thinks fit to deny him, *No true lasting Peace can be expected by those who Love any thing in and for its self, besides God.*

6ly 'Tis An undervaluing *of his honor*. He is born an heir of Heaven, a Son of God; For him to dote on such mean things here Below is much below him.

7ly. 'Tis A robbing *of God in what is his due*, he requires his heart.

My Son give me thyne heart, not a peice of it. *Thou shall Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart Matt.* 22. 37. Heres nothing left for the Creature, it is Idolatry setting the Creature on Gods throne.

8ly. 'Tis a Representing of Faith unto others as an ineffectuall principle, that has not Power in it to *Overcome the World*, and the lusts thereof and thereby is a reall Scandall to others; While they find some cause by what they discerne in thee to Justify themselves in their neglect to pursue after further attainments; because were there any thing more to be hoped for in this Life, then so long a Standar in Religion Would have reached it.

9ly. It is an abusing of Creature Comforts, making them as Snares to the Soul, which were

but

but intended for bodily conveniencies.

Vse. 1*ſt.* As we deſire to evidence we have the feare of God before our eyes, Let us lay it upon our Conſciences to Eſchew *Immoderation* as well as other ſins, It is a ſin as dangerous as any; So much the more dangerous as People are leſs Suſpicious of it, Allow themſelves without Scruple in it.

Oh Let not that which ſhould be improved as a motive ſo to ſtir us up to a greater Care in avoiding it, be abuſed as a plea to Juſtify our ſelves in giving way to it; ſay not we are Naturally prone to it, therefore we hope none will blame us much if we be a little gaſky here, *But thou*, let the keep a more ſtrict guard over my heart, bee me more ſhun Temptation, let me with greater earneſtneſs beg of God that he would keep me from being overtaken. Oh let us take heed and put ourſelves in mind that we may be as *Immoderate* in overhaving, Prizing, Carking about even the *very Conveniencys and neceſſityes of this Life*, as in over earneſt deſiring, eager purſuing ſuperfluities.

1*ſt.* What ſhall we that are but ſtrangers here, Travellers into eternity, dote of any thing in our Paſſage, Contract Entanglements and burdens to our ſelves.

2*ly.* Have we not Incumbrance enough, and ſhall we ſo far forget the worth of our Souls as to proſtitute them to ſuch mean and low things, to Tumble them in mire and dirt.

3*ly*. Are there not better things Provided for us; Shall we then throw away our ſelves, our Love upon baſe things.

4*ly*. What is there in theſe things Lovely, what reallity, what beauty, Savour? Shall we dote on flitting ſhadows, be ſo Childiſh as to cry for Toyes?

5*ly*. If there be any thing in the things that can make them deſirable, any worth in them, any Vſe of them, ſhall we by Overloving them Conſtrain God to deprive us of them, God is a Jealous God, whatever comes to Rivall him in our Affections, he muſt remove it.

If the Child will hurt its ſelf with its Toyes, or fall of ſucking Poyſon out of what was given to look on, is it not time for the parent to take it away?

6*ly*. Oh that we did but conſider what thoughts we ſhall have of theſe things when we come to die, when Conſcience begins to ſtirre, eternity approaches, when paſſions are laid, and we view the Backſide of vanity, How little Lovelineſs will there appeare in them then. How ſhall we then wiſh when it will be to late we had Loved them leſs and ſomewhat elſe more.

7*ly*. Is the ſalvation of our precious Soules ſo eaſy a buſineſs that we can Spare any of our Strength, Care and time about other Impertinences,

8*ly*. What ſhall we do when God ſhall ſtrip us of theſe, if our hearts be Engaged in them how

how shall we bear up? How will it break us? Had we not better by degrees loosen our selves from these? Leasurely fall of and retire from them.

9*ly* Let us aske our Souls what they verily thinke Wise persons Would do in the case, and while we hate the Name, let us not Act the part of Fools, Is it not folly to engage our selves in intimate Friendship with those whom it is certain we must breake with or be utterly undone.

10*ly*. What do we get by Overloving these things? Do we not engage our selves in greater cares how to keep them, Expose our Selves to greater sorrows upon their loss?

11*ly*. Shall God then lose his Labour in preparing another feast, shall we dispise his Love that has invited unto it?

12*ly*. Shall we come and Clap the Covetous ambitions, Voluptuous on the back and bid them go on in their Courses, we like them so well we shall follow as fast as we can; We will go as far as we dare?

13*ly*. Suppose we should escape falling into the pit, do we do well to play on the brink?

But how shall we come to this *Moderation*?

1*st*. Restrain the working of an *Immoderate heart*, observe it, desire God to subdue it, disallow the workings of it, Forbeare to do what it calls you unto.

2*ly*. Make it your business to get your heart weaned from the World.

1*st*. Get your selves throughly convinced of

the

the *sinfulness and danger* of your Condition while *Inconsideration* prevailes.

2*ly*. Improve frustrations and Crosses while they are fresh.

3*ly*. Get the great things of Eternity *Realized* unto you.

4*ly*. Beg of God to shew you the *hope of your Calling*.

5*ly*. Labour every morning to fit your hearts into an Heavenly frame, warmed and raised in desires after the things above, watch and give all diligence to keep them thus *in the fear of the Lord all the day Long*, Suffer them not to wander after these Vanitys you every day Meet with, without a severe Check; Let them not be engaged in your Ordinary business, take heed you be Pleasing your selves, or Seeking your selves in it.

6*ly*. Get a sense of your Misery, and then you'l better understand the vanity of these things, you'l feel that within you which will continually be telling you, you stand in need of something else, something that must do you good.

7*ly*. When ever you go to prayer, Labour to get your Souls wrought into a desire after this, let this be the main petition upon your hearts when you go to God, *that he would give you new Holy Heavenly Spirituall hearts, weaned disengaged disentangled Loosned* From the World, he has bestowed this upon some, why may not you hope for it.

8*ly*. Take heed of too much familiarity with those

those who are earthly minded, though they be given to no other vice, their Company is infectious, a mans Company do's not only shew *Ordinarily* what he is, but *makes him so*.

9ly. Labour after intimate Communion with God, which when once you know the way of, frequently be retiring your selves to, there you'l taste better comforts from thence *Hill you may view all the Glory of the world*, and see it to be but withering grasse, Fading flowers *Psal.* 73. *Untill I went into the Sanctuary &c.*

Vse. 2. Let us humble our selves in the sight of God for our neglect of this duty hitherto.

It may be we may Remember how many severall ways God has Endeavoured to take us off from the World, but has he not lost his Labour, are we not still Immoderate to this day? Notwith-standing the Crosses and frustrations we have mett with, and what if God for our obstinacy should resolve to leave us to our selves, no more to *Rebuke or thwart us*, will it any thing advantage us to thrive in wickedness, to get the *desire of our hearts*?

Vse. 3. Let us not take those Providences ill at Gods hand which may be a means to bring us to the practice of this duty.

God Crosses us of our desire and this we like not, but he sees we are *Immoderate* in them, and *he would make us see too*, he gives us to feel the trouble of it, that the paine of the disease may make us seek out for the Cure of it.

Vse.

Vse. 4. As you love the Souls of your Relations rather call them to *Moderation* then encourage them in over Eager pursuit after things of this World, you like when they are *Moderate* in the vse of Creature Comforts, are not expensive, its well, but oh that you Could as much approue their undervaling all things here below, their indifferency as to them; What do you account your Estates more worth then your Souls, Alas what will it do them good when they come to die, that they have been rich or great in the World, though this be the only thing ordinarily prized, I would have none slothfull indeed, careless, negligent, I would have them in the fear of God to set about their particular Callings *diligently and faithfully*, but I would have them act upon nobler *Principles* then Love of vanity, *for worthier ends*, then scraping a little dirt together.

Vse 5. Judge of your own and others attainments, as by your ability and readiness to performe other duty's so especially this.

A

A VISITATION SERMON

Preached at *Richmond*, before the Bishop of *Chester*, in the Year, 1665.

Malachi, 2. 7.

For the priests lips should keep knowledg

THE First particle in the text shews the words to be rationall, and bids us look Back to enquire what it is in the forgoing part of the Chapter, which they give an account of. There we find the Lord turning from the People whom he had Charged with severall Miscarriages, unto the Preists, *Verse* 1. And them he tells he had a word for *even for them*, A Word of *Injunction Verse*. 2. To heare and take notice of the great provocations among the People, and to lay it to Heart as a matter sadly to be Lamented, being bad in its Nature, dangerous in its Consequences; And not to rest here in a Fruitless Greiving for the dishonour of the great God, and the sins, Miseries and dangers of a poor People, but to turne their sorrow into *Zeal*, and to take an Effectuall course to secure the *Sinking interest of the Nation*, by re-

storing

ſtoring God his due, and giving him againe the Glory he had been defrauded of. A Word of *Comination* to back this, either do as I Charge you or look to your ſelves, ſeverall Bleſſings ye enjoy, I believe you would not willingly part with them, but take what other Courſe you will they ſhall be all blaſted, if I ſuffer the Curſe to come among you that will make havock, and I will be ſo far from reſtraining it, that I my ſelf will ſend it. A word of *Commemoration* to drive all home, did I ſay I would Curſe you, ye may well truſt me for I have already begun and that upon your neglect herein; *If Judgments threatned cannot awake you, pray let Judgments inflicted do it, though you may put by your Fears, ſure you cannot put off your feeling too.*

But leaſt all this ſhould be too little to work them up to a real Reformation, he goes two ſteps further.

1ſt. The threatening which he ſeemed to ſuſpend the execution of, untill he had made ſome tryall whether they would heare or no, here he denounces abſolutely without any Reſerves, leaſt they ſhould at leaſt delay, Setting in good earneſt to return to their duty out of hopes that Judgment would however be deferred, if it could not be reverſed.

2ly. That they might be more fully poſſeſt with diſtinct apprehenſions of their danger, he repreſents it at large in two particulars, which touch nature where it has the quickeſt ſenſe.

1ſt

1*st*. Of pain, which unavoidably followeupon the Cutting of all hopes, of not only the Comforts but the Necessary supports of nature, while he threatens to Corrupt the very first principles, the seed of these.

2*ly*. Of shame, when that which should be the highest Honour, Proves the Greatest disgrace, and dung is as it were taken from their Sacrifices and thrown in their very faces.

Now least God in this way of Proceeding should be taxed of too much severity; he for the Vindication of himself declares,

1*st*. That there is Love in all this, and great Love too. The design of all his threatnings and Chastizings being only to reduce them to their primitive purity, and to interest them in those privileges which the Tribe of *Levi* did at first enjoy.

2*ly*. However there is *Justice* in it, for if the Priests by their unfaithfulness in their place suffer the People to run into sin, and when they have done so, never lay it to heart, nor endeavour to reclaim them, it is but Just they should smart for it. Well, therefore may I proceed thus rigorously against the Priests ——— *For they ought to keep knowledge*; where in the whole *Verse* you have,

1*st*. *The Priests dignity declared* (for the sence is Retrograde to the Words) as despicable as he Looks in the eyes of the proud profane Worldlings, he is no mean one in the Judgment of the wisest

wiſeſt, beſt and greateſt. God himſelf pitches upon him as one of ſuch Qualifications and hopes as render him fit to be truſted in an Imployment of higheſt Conſequence, a meſſage from the King of Heaven, unto the greateſt on Earth, and ſuch a Meſſage alſo as concerns them more then all their Comforts in this Life, as much as their Souls, their very Souls and their unſpeakable, unconceivable happineſs or miſery to all Eternity is worth. Man counteth an Honour to be made uſe of as an Ambaſſador or Envoy to a forrein State, by one who ſetting aſide his clothes and titles, is but Fleſh and Blood like themſelves, but whole approbation of a Mans abilities and Faithfulneſs, is no certain Teſtimony of them, his Judgment being liable to a double miſcarriage: The one by miſtake, while he preſumes the Man to be endowed with thoſe vertues and accompliſhments which he is really without, only hath the ſhadow of them.

The other by miſ-valuing, while he over values his indifferent parts, and makes ſmall of his notorious Vices; but here is one approved by the God of greateſt underſtanding and Wiſdom, imployed by one who is *LORD*, not in title but in reality. One who has the command not of one ſmall Army, but of all the forces on Earth, yea in Heaven and Hell too; The *Generaliſſimo* of all, who has them abſolutely at his beck.

2ly. Ye have upon this a double duty founded.

1ſt. Of the Prieſt, therefore it is expected from him *to preſerve Knowledge*; Even in the moſt

corrupt

corrupt and degenerate age, let him Remember whose business he is about, whose dependent he is, and let him not be Afraid of Speaking seasonable and usefull truths, tho' they may thwart the Interests of the very Greatest, and Provoke their Indignation against him, and so Expose himself unto Hazards, the Lord of Hosts whose Messenger he is, Is able to protect him in the Work he sets him about, let the whole World and Hell too do its worst, and he will do it in spite of them.

2ly. Of the people, it is Justly expected from them, that they should not onely give the Minister an hearing when he comes to seek them, but they should also seek him, that they May hear at his mouth what is the Message he brings from Heaven, and what the Lord requires at their hands. If they dare venture to put an affront upon the Lord of hosts and an high one too, and Engage him against them, they may Suffer him to send on purpose to them about their greatest concerns, and declare to the World that they neither Value him nor his Messenger nor his Message any more then if it came from a vain weak Foolish mortall Inconsiderable man like themselves, nay not so much, they'l not stir to the door to hear it.

And all this is suggested to Justify God in the severity he seemes to make Use of while he punishes and threatens the Preists so very sharply. Well may God make them smart with a witness while they suffer the People to dishonour him

and undo themselves, which possibly might have been prevented, if they would be mindfull of their duty in Letting the People know theirs, and the great danger they run upon in neglecting it. Which they were much obliged to do, being so greatly confided in by the high God to be Employed by him about such a message, and concerned to do, least they incur the displeasure of the great God the Lord of Hosts. And pray what danger had they run upon if they had been ingenuous and Faithfull? Need they have feared to be the least harmed by feeble man having the Lord of Hosts, in whose Message they were employed, standing at their back to defend them? So that.

3ly. Ye have the Improvement made of both by Application to the present occasion.

Doct. It is one of the main Dutyes of the Ministers to preserve Knowledge by their Lips; If by their Unfaithfulness in the discharge of this duty they suffer people to dishonour the great God, and ruine their Poor Souls, they have no reason to Quarrel with God, if he make their lives Miserable, and their Persons despicable. *Ver.* 3.

1st. I do not say that it is the duty onely of the Minister; No every Particular person has a Soul, a precious Soul to look after, which without knowledge, and real powerfull Knowledge is like to be miserable unto all Eternity, and if it be so, he'l find that he himself is the most to blame; He therefore should get knowledge and

preserve

preserve it in himself whatever it cost him.

Every Master of a family should preserve the Knowledge which is according to Godliness in his Family, and if this should fail it will not Justify him at the great day when the Impartial God enquires how comes it to pass that thy Wife, thy Child, thy Servants were so grosly Ignorant of God? And by reason of this are now like to be as Extreamly Miserable? to say then, alas Lord the Minister did not teach them as he ought. If it be so as thou sayest, will his Neglect of his duty Excuse thy sin, while thou Neglectest thine, or rather will it not agravate it? that when thou plainly seest the danger so be so Extreme great with those Poor Souls, that Perish they must in all likelyhood, unless thou took due care and paines about them to save them, seing none else Would heed them: thou seest them take the directest Course unto utter destruction, and yet for all the Love thou so much pretendedst to them, never hadst the pity to their perishing Souls as once to aske them that serious Question what mean you? know you whether you are going?

The School-Master should preserve saving Knowledge among his Scholars: Has he not such Advantages by the awe that he has them in, to mould their tender years almost what way he pleases, which few else have? Has he not them then under his instruction and discipline when they are not onely docible but pliable also? And can he satisfy his Conscience, and Answer it to

God if he Improve this opportunity no further then to instruct them well in the grounds of Languages, arts and sciences; If he bring them under the precepts of morality and civility, so that they can Command their passions and appetites and evidence their good breeding by their seemly and sober behaviour in every thing, when in the mean while he do's no more to the saving of the Soul, by bringing it to the true Knowledge of God in Christ then as if his Scholars carried no such things about them: or they were onely concerned in the advantages of his life. If one of these Poor wretches should meet his Master at the great day and say, O Master, I am undone and I may partly thank you for it, while I was with you in my tender age, before Custome in Sin had hardened my heart, I had then some tenderness of Conscience, and if you had but then at spare times minded me of my sinfull, miserable, Dangerous state, you might then have put me in such a way as would have saved me from this Endless Torment I am now Entering into, what will he be able to returne to this?

Nor only. Do I say it is the Ministers duty to preserve Knowledge Meerly by his Lips. No his very life should be a continuall Sermon, and in that he should let People see Knowledge digested into practise, and good instructions exemplified before their eyes. For how can he Expect that the People should believe him who Evidences by his Contrary practise that he do's not

believe

believe himself? or whether is it more Likely they will follow him the way he points, or the way he walks? He tells us indeed that it is our duty to do so and so, and frights us with dreadfull dangers, if we do otherwise, but certainly he do's not think as he Speaks, for then he Would never do contrary; Sure he loves himself as well as he do's us, and he knowes what is good for himself, and what is good for him, can never be hurtfull for us.

But this I say one of the great dutys of the Minister is to preserve knowledg and right apprehensions in People, agreeable to the very Nature of the things, and firm Perswasions of the rectitude of these Apprehentions, so as to be duly affected with those, and to be Powerfully Actuated by them.

If you aske, what Knowledge? The resolution is easy out of the very text; that Knowledge which would Effectually restrain People from those practises, which did greatly provoke the Righteous God against them. And I pray you what do's skill in variety of Languages avail to this? will it reform Lives, and save Souls and Maintain Peace, and order, and Charity, to puzzle an Ignorant auditory with Sentences of Latin or Greek, either out of Heathen poets, or Philosophers, or out of Fathers, Schoolmen, or Councells, th t they do not the least understand; Or if they did, they know not how far they are to be heeded; Will God be better served, and superiours

more obeyed, and Corruptions more mortified, and graces more exercised, and Afflictions better Improved, and our brethren more loved, and helped in the way to Heaven by the Ministers making a business of it to Perswade his auditours that he has a little Learning.

2ly. Out of the very nature of the thing; is not that Knowledge to be Preferred by the Minister which is the most proper for a *Divine*, who is to speak as the *Oracles of God*, to Commend himself to the very Consciences of his people not to their fancies and humours. To discourse of the Nature and properties and simpathies and Antipathies of things, the magnitude, Motion & influence of the Stars, the situations distances and Temperature of places &c. This may be proper for a Philosopher; to discourse of the Intregues of Government, for a Statesman; but what is this to a Divine? whose Business is to save the Souls of poor people, if it be possible, however to bring them to as great an outward Reformation as may be; And to keep up the honour of God in the World, and to secure the peace of societies by principles of Conscience, and to help Gods afflicted ones to bear up under their heavy Crosses, by those Comforts which the World is unacquainted with; and to teach those who are upright hearted to make a wise Improvement of all Advantages, of providences, &c.

If ye aske what Knowledge serves these ends? there is,

1ly.

1st, *The Knowledge of God*, Letting people know what an *Holy God* he is, that he cannot endure that they should allow themselves in the least impurity of flesh or Spirit, *a Righteous God* who will render to every one impartially according to their wayes, without any respect of persons; *a Mercifull God*, who will pity humbled penitents in their miseries, be they never so sinfull; *A good God*, who well deserves to be Loved with the whole heart and Soul; *A dreadfull God*, who will be greatly feared by all those, who are not stark mad, so as with their eyes broad open, desperately to run upon their ruine; *A wise Powerfull, Allsufficient, true & faithfull God*, who never yet did faile his people in any case, where they solely relied upon him, but has helped them, and do's help, even then, when the World concludes there is no help for them in God, and they themselves do much question, whether there be or no. In a Word, that he is a God who Made Heaven and Earth, and do's oversee continually all Persons and Affaires in them, be they never so Secret, and he rules and disposes of them all every way as he pleases, without any controll, and he makes every passage to promote the Comfort & welfare of those that truly love and fear him, and will bring to utter Shame and Misery all those who despise him, and choose the World for their portion, however he may suffer them to flourish for a while.

2ly. *The Knowledge of the world*, how little

there is in it to fil the capacities, to supply the needs, to satisfie the desires of an Immortall soul, how vain and unsavory all the Comforts of it are, especially to such an one as is awakened to a due sense of the wretched Misery and extreme danger of a poor soul, and the concernments of Eternity; How uncertain all the enjoyments, Exposed to infinite hazards and running to and fro, ways and while possest, are oft made wearisome by the Cumber of them, vexatious by the Crosses interwoven with them, dangerous by the snares of them. A *Minister* can do no greater service to God, and Souls, then by rubbing off the paint from the Face of the Tempting whore, stripping her of her Gawdy Ornaments, whereby she do's bewitch the Inhabitants of the Earth.

3*ly*. *The Knowledge of our selves*; How nobly Descended from *Adam* the Son of God, the Master-ship of Gods Creation; how Richly Accomplished with Wisdome, Righteousnes, and Power; how largely Capacitated for higher and more glorious enjoyments; how Lamentably Degenerated into a state of shame, misery and danger; How dark, polluted, and Distempered our Souls are; how frail and crazy our bodies, how vain and miserable our Lives, how sad and Hopeless our Death; How Unconceiveably wretched, if we come short of Christ; how strangly Senseless of our Need of him; how Grosly Ignorant of the way to him; how foolishly con-

tent

ent to take up short of him; How few real Friends we have to our Souls, how many the Enemies, quite out of Favour with God, out of Peace with our selves; The Curses of the Law we are to Expect, the Joyes and Glorys of Heaven we may hear of indeed, but cannot hope for; Hell with its Torments and Confusions is our portion.

4ly. *The Knowledge of Christ*, in him there is merit Enough to Appease a Provoked God, to Satisfie violated Justice, he has peace Enough to speak to a troubled Conscience, ease to give to a burdened spirit, he can quicken the dead heart, subdue the stubborne, strengthen the weak, soften the hard, enlarge the strait, compose the distracted, make Fruitfull the barren; He can inform the ignorant, rectify the mistaken, Counsell the Foolish, Resolve Doubts, Discover Wanes, Distempers, Dangers, Remedies, Supplies, helps, *&c.* He can give grace to make holy, Heavenly, meek, Lowly, Selfdenying, obedient, resigned, patient, Dependant upon God, every way pious toward God, Just and Charitable to brethren.

5ly. *Knowledge of the way to Christ*, The true, the onely way, the ready and sure way. That this is obedience and self denyall, faithfulness to God and their own Souls in there, as light and strength is given in. For onely this way a man comes to find Really and Experimentally the blindness, weakness, Poverty, & Corruption of his

nature

nature and heart which else at best he knows but by hearsay, untill by putting himself out to the outmost he finds that his Soul is little else but a lump of Darkness and Sin; duty he knows but very Faintly, what he Knows though it be but little he is not able to practise, the Law comes in here, sayes *do this and Live*; he is not able to do it though it cost him his life, it sayes refrain such courses, or my curse is against you, your Souls & Bodies, as to the concernments of this Life and the other, yet though it bring never so much misery he is not able to refrain, Notwithstanding all his reasonings with himself, his Resolutions & endeavours: Either put of your Lusts and be Clothed with the graces of the spirit or else no enterance into Heaven; he finds he can do neither.

I say till a man come to follow God faithfully according to that discovery, which he makes of himself unto his Conscience, he will never come so far as to understand really the Depravedness of his nature, the strict requisings of the Law, his vtter inability to help himself, and so never finds any need of Christ, never is in good Earnest to lay hold of him; but Contents himself with a Christ of his own making, and so Lives and Dies in his corrupt nature, and all his groundless hopes wherewith he flattered himself do not save him from the misery he never thought of.

6ly. *Knowledge of the priviledges which are in Christ*; God reconciled, Conscience quieted, the heart at rest, the Soul purified and enlightened,

filled

filled with *Peace passing understanding*; *Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*; the Man himself and his, as to all their Concernments here and hereafter under the Charge of that providence which overrules all; God continually present to guide him in his wayes, to comfort and help in Afflictions, and to make People seek after Christ not onely out of necessity, but out of Choice, as one who has enough in him to Recompence for all the losses and crosses in the way to him.

The Knowledge of Duties, what God requires of all to practise for their own good, and the good of their Brethren, and how to practise it in such a way as the good that God drives at by it may be Attained.

To shew what the man owes to himself, his Soul & his Body; To keep his body in Chastity & Sobriety; To get his Soul quickened with the Life of Christ, enlightened with the knowledge of all it's great concernments, what he owes to others, as a Magistrate, a Subject, a Minister, a Parishioner; A Master or Servant, an Husband, a Wife, a Father, a Child &c. And to make people know that their duties are their interests too, and not made Necessary by being enjoyned, but therefore enjoyned because discerned by the wisdom of God to be Vsefull; Not burdens laid on People Arbitrarily by God, to make a vain ostentation of his Soveraignty, but prescriptions Accomodate to the Necessitous and Distempered Condition of apostate nature, to direct them

what

what Course to take for their recovery, and to do this with that authority, which may awe them, to make use of these directions, though contrary to their inclinations. To shew them the means, the Encouragements, and to Answer their objections.

8*ly*. *Knowledge of Liberty*, That an upright Person may in certain cases Act this way, or that way, as there shall be occasion, without danger of Sinning even in matters of *Religion*, which as to the External and Mutable part of it do's admitt of great latitude, and may be Modelliz'd this way, or that way, as it shall be found to serve most to it's main ends, the generall good of Souls and the peace of States; And where it is thus ordered upon serious Deliberation by those who have authority; what before was indifferent in it self, now becomes necessary, by vertue of Gods Law which requires us to, *Submit to every ordinance of man for the Lords sake*, and those who know the things Injoyned to be indifferent and do not submit, they are the more guilty. Those who question the Indifferency of them, if indeed they were indifferent and be Commanded, Sin still, while they do not submit, because they do that which ought not to be done, in Refusing, though indeed they are excusable and to be pitied and born with in all meekness. And to be prayed for, because what they do, they doe not willfully, but Ignorantly, and so their neglect of duty is rather their weakness then their sin.

Only

Only they are to be desired and admonished not to hug their own mistakes, but to be ready to receive Satisfaction, and seek out for it in the use of all means and not sit down peremtorily Concluding it is not to be had, because they do not meet with it as soon as is to be wished. They do no small Service unto God and the Nation, yea unto poor mistaken Souls also, who, so far as is Possible, endeavour to deliver tender Consciences from these groundless scruples, Wherewith they Needlessly Trouble themselves and others, and hinder themselves from the vigorous minding the grand vsefull Necessary things of *Religion*, which are almost generally Resolved upon without dispute by all parties; And who make People to Understand that they may be as well Superstitious on the one hand while they make that unlawfull to be done (yea even when it is Commanded [by Authority]) which God has left wholly to the discretion of his People, as on the other hand while they will needs have that Necessary in it self which God Never made so.

9*ly*. *Knowledge of Sins*, not sparing to let all know wherein they do amiss, and how far they do amisse and what dangers they incur. Without fear to loss their Favour though never so valuable, to provoke their Indignation though never so Dreadfull, to prejudice themselves as to their owne Temporall interests, that People being made Sensible which way they do Amiss may know who

how to prevent Judgment, and betake themselves to serious Humiliation and Reformation, and this is the greatest Love and Faithfulnesse to Souls, and what will in the issue gain us the greatest Favour and Respect, not onely from God, but men also, when we will not sit still and look on while we see them making hast to undo themselves. But throw away all Considerations of our selves and run to save them from Ruine, though for our pains at the First we get nothing but ill will and worse words at the best.

2dly, *Knowledge of Providences*; National, domestical and personall letting them plainly see how God does appear in his Judgments against Sin, and Encourage uprightnesse with his mercies, that so they may lay hold on the Present advantage of Providence while it is fresh in their minds and has the Powerfullest Influence upon the heart, to work their Souls up unto a Greater Detestation of iniquity and a more ardent Love of Righteousnesse. Knowledge of these things.

1st. Ought to be preserved, because else the great God will be provoked by mans Sins and so a floudgate let open to all Judgments. Precious Souls will be lost, Souls better worth then the whole World, Souls which Christ counted not too dearly purchased with the price of his own Blood, Souls capable of and made for the Enjoyments of God to Eternity will bequite Lost. The

Nation

Nation will be Miserably Distracted by sad devisions which are as well the naturall result of want of Knowledge, as the Just Judgment of God upon it.

2ly. By the Ministers for,

1st. Who have better Abilities their parts (which though they Commend not to God, yet none can deny, but they make more fit for the Service of God where they are rightly used) Ordinarily more nimble and solid then others, these more enlarged and heightened by education and Converse with the most Understanding Persons Living, and the serious most digested thoughts of such as are dead, and Further Improved by their own Observation, and Experience of their owne hearts and Lives, besides that of others whereby they Understand the weakness and Corruption of Nature, in its present state, the Temptations and Snares, which Ordinarily do Occurr, the helps which are most usefull &c.

2ly. Who have fairer Opportunities, they being by the Good Providence of God, and the Wisdome and piety of former Ages so competently Provided for, that they need not lay out their thoughts, time and strength about Providing for themselves and Familye the Necessaries of this Life. So that they have more leisure to give themselves up to the studying of, and Pursuing after the great things of Eternity, and holding out these clearly and distinctly to others engaging

them

them to make sure of them.

3ly. Whose calling is it but theirs that to do? Others indeed as Christians are obliged to promote Knowlede as far and to preserve it as much as they can without neglect of other Necessary duties which are incumbent on them, and which are in the First place to be Considered. But who but the Ministers are they whose main work it is; whom God the great Master in his Large Family of the World has as it were Comitted the Keyes of Knowledge to take in and lay out as there shall be occation, To whom God as it were has said: This is your task, Look ye to it; my other business I have comitted to the Charge of my other Servants, I do not Expect you should trouble your selves with it.

3ly. *This by their Lips, for.*

1ly. *Doctrine* is the seed and so more proper to begin a Reformation in the hearts and Lives of People which is most generally wanting.

2ly. Its more pure, Example being Doctrine ripened into some maturity and groweth is not free from it's stubble, Chaffe, and Tares, and few are able to say be ye Followers of me, without that Limitation so far as I am of Christ.

3ly. Its more vniversall, Example Reaching unto those few onely with whom we Particularly converse vnless it be by Report which ordinarily makes wrong Representation of every thing.

2ly. *Doctrine* rather then writing, which do's more Affect dull People, more instruct Ignorant

Peoples

People, they by reason of their manifold distractions, generally being not able to Compose their minds unto a Calm perusall of any Sober Discourse.

Use. 1st. See the great honour conferred by God himself upon the Minister, in that he trusts him with that, which is of highest Esteem, even with men of the World; for who are they allmost that count it not a greater reproach to be called Fool then Knave; yea and that Knowledge too, which is of greatest vse, of grandest Concernment, which is the main Security of Gods Honour and Souls welfare. And where are those proud ones then, who date despise such as the King of Heaven is pleased thus to Honour? Let others boast of their being keepers of the Liberty of their Country, of the Peace of their Country, let it be Enough for thee that thou art one of Gods Preservers of Knowledge, in matters of the greatest value.

O take heed of being Treacherous in a matter of highest trust, neither be thou so Disingenuous as to disapoint him, who has so much Honoured thee above others, by failing his Expectations, in the discharge of thy trust.

2ly. See what is a Necessary Qualification in a Minister, the want of which cannot be dispensed with in any wise; he is to preserve Knowledge, and this is his Office, at least the main part of it. Now how can he do this, if he have it not?

O that this were more seriously Considered both by the Candidates of the Ministry, and also by those, in whom the power of presenting and Instituting is invested by the Laws! Do any appoint a Blind Man to be a Watchman, or a Shepherd, or pitch upon a Cripple to make a Foot Post of?

Indeed were the primary intention of benefices meerly for the sustentation of those in them, it were another matter; but when this is only taken in, as it lies in the way, to an higher end, and as it is Necessary to fit the more for the better service of the Community, in that which is most Considerable; What an horrible abuse is it of the Charity of Predecessors, and the gracious providence of God, to serve private interests, with such a palpable wrong unto so many Souls, who by this means are Extremely indangered, if not certainly ruined.

And let me tell you, untill an expedient be found out to give a Check unto the many Miscarriages this way, and an effectuall course taken to prosecute it to the utmost, it is in vain to hope *that Honour will be ever* Restored to the Ministry, which it has already lost, or those reduced into the bosome of the Church, as it now stands, who through manifold (I wish I could say altogether groundless) Prejudices have had their minds alienated from it, and upon that have Separated.

3*ly*. See how to Judge of the Goodness or Badness of Sermons; Ask, how they serve their Ends?

What poor Commendation is it of a Sermon, when People say of it; that it was Witty, or Rationall, or Learned, and it may be those people too, who are very incompetent Judges, what is Genuine wit, clear reason, and solid Learning, when there is not one dram of Knowledge in it all, and there is never a sleepy Sinner is able to Arrest, it is good Physick, I found it gripe at my Conscience, awakening it; never a hungry Soul can say; it is good food, I found it warm at my heart, Refreshing and strengthening it.

4*ly*. Be not afraid to speak true Knowledge, Let it offend who it will. If any be so bold, as to quarrell with thee about it, bid them, let thee alone, thou art about thy business, let them go and mind theirs. Tell them, thou wouldest not willingly provoke them, if thou Couldest help it, but thou darest not Neglect thy duty, and ask them, whether it be more Reasonable to humour them to their prejudice, or to be faithfull unto God, who has set thee this task, and unto them too, by endeavouring to do them good, if it be Possible, though thou hast no thanks for thy pains from them. If thou canst satisfy those, who are contentious, it will be well, however thou needst not fear their Loud threats: Let them do their worst, thou art about thy duty, and he

that ſet thee thy Employment, is able to defend thee in it.

5*ly*. Be not diſcouraged in thy faithfull endeavours, though the ſucceſs Anſwer not thy deſires and Expectations. Though thou haſt held forth Knowledge a long while, inculcated it again and again, and thoſe, whom thou ſpeakeſt to, are ſtill as Ignorant Generally of thoſe things, which ſhould better their hearts, and Reform their Lives, and ſave their Souls, as ever, thou haſt done this in Seaſon and out of Seaſon, they are ſtill where they were.

It is ſad indeed, that People ſhould be ſo reſolved on their ſinfull courſes, that when all is ſaid, they ſhould hold on ſtill, whatever it coſts them; but here is thy Comfort, thou haſt diſcharged thy duty, and thou ſhalt not in any wiſe loſe thy reward. Go on ſtill in God's name.

6*ly*. Let the Judgments of God, which are out againſt the Miniſtry, lead us into a ſerious inquiry whether all theſe may not be imputed unto our neglect of this duty; we ſhould preſerve Knowledge, which will humble the proud Sinner, and feed the hungry Soul, but inſtead of wholeſome food we put off our People with airy Notions, we trouble them with hard diſputes and ſubtleties. And can we wonder then, that the Name, which has been a high title of honour, ſhould now be an Ordinary term of reproach; that the Calling which formerly was ſo much loved and reverenced

nced by the ſobereſt and wiſeſt People, cannot ow ſecure the Perſons in it from Contempt and atred; that, what is due to us by all Laws of en, and by all rules of Equity and Religion alſo, ould be not onely grudged us, but obſtinately efuſed by ſome, and that upon pretences of Conſcience too.

It is to be feared that the threatning *Verſe.* 3. as taken hold of us. O let us labour to be ſenible of our great guilt, and Exceedingly humbld for it, and let us Juſtify God in his Righteous Judgements againſt us; and be ſo wiſe, as to take he onely way for the removall of them, which s, ſetting our ſelves ſeriouſly about a reall reformation herein.

7ly. Let the due Conſideration of this being our duty ſtir us all up, to endeavour the faithfull diſcharge of it; let it be enough that we have hitherto wholly Neglected it, or much ſlubbered it.

1ſt. Care we not, though we provoke the great God to lay us aſide alſo, as he has done others? Can we expect that he ſhould continue us in that Office, which we do not at all diſcharge? Dare we trie, whether God will be as good as his word, and do to us, as he has formerly ſaid, he Would do to others? *Becauſe thou haſt rejected Knowledge, I will alſo reject thee that thou ſhalt be no Prieſt to me.* Hoſ. 4. 6.

2ly. Care we not, though ſo many precious

Souls, whom God has Committed to our Charge, be ruined to all Eternity, and while they roar under their unspeakable Torments, Curse us, who might have prevented it, if we had been Faithfull? Have we no pitty to them? Must we not one day Answer for them? What shall we say, when God shall ask us, did not I appoint you to preserve Knowledge? How comes it to pass, that my People are Destroyed for want of Knowledge?

3*ly*. It is nothing to us that the Nation lies Bleeding? *Abroad the Sword bereaveth, at home there is as Death.* Lam. 1. 20. Much sad complaining of Poor people, many grounds of further fear, and what will be the end of all, the Lord onely knows; and all this, because *The Lord has a Controversie with the Inhabitants of the Land, there being so little Knowledge of God in the Land.* Hos. 4. 1.

4*ly*. Can we expect, that People should ever give over Separating from our Congregations, how strict soever the provision made by the Laws be, when having a great famine in their Souls, and a thirst for the word of Knowledge, they come amongst us, and get none?

If there be any here, that can account it nothing, though the great and dreadfull God be provoked, poor Souls be Everlastingly undone, a Flourishing Nation laid desolate, a Church well ordered as to the main, miserably torne in

pieces

pieces by Schismes, a Ministry, which hitherto God has Honoured, by using it to the Converting and edifying of Souls, laid aside as an useless instrument; I know not what to say to them, which I can hope will take the least hold of them; they may go and follow their Pleasures, trade and toil in the World to be Rich and great, and in the mean while quite forget, that it was any part of their duty to preserve saving Knowledge; Only let me tell them this, time may come, when they shall too late find, it was a duty; when Judgements have pursued and overtaken them, and Conscience is awakened out of its long sleep; when outward afflictions press and pinch, and Terrours of Death and Hell Affright, and all Comfort and help from Creatures fails, and the man knows not, which way to turne him, or what will become of him, then they will wish they had Considered it sooner.

But for you (*My Brethren*) who have engaged in this great work, following the inward call of God, being fully perswaded in your hearts, that by devoting your selves this way, you might do God and his People best service, let me speak a word to you and my self.

Let us make it appear, that how hard conceits soever some have of us, we have a tender and regard to our duty, as well as they, while we faithfully discharge it; Let us confute the prejudices, which prevail much in the World

against us [as if we were a generation of men, that might be best spared] by being really usefull; let us manage our business so, that their Consciences may justify us, when their humour and Interests engage them most in the quarrell against us.

1st. Let us Labour to grow in Knowledge; Reall, Spirituall, Experimentall, Solid and usefull Knowledge; let us faithfully set our selves to do Gods will, and he will make us know it: Get our hearts made more pure, then our heads will be more clear: Earnestly press after the Spirit of truth and Knowledge, which is able to reveal unto us the hidden things of God, and to lead us into all truth; Let us study throughly our own hearts [we need not read over the Whole impression] and the Bible; these we shall find the best Books, out of which we may be sufficiently furnished with whatsoever is usefull: Let us faithfully make use of our talents, that God may encrease them.

2ly. Let us in holding out Knowledge, be faithfull, instant in season and out of season, and wise also, let us meddle little with disputable Points; these, take them generally, come not near the heart of *Religion*, they do small good, a great deal of harm, making People proud, Talkative and quarrelsome, Diverting them also from the main of *Religion* to impertinencies.

Deal gently with Conscientious dissenters; they

they will not be won by being reproached and taunted, by being rendred odious to those about them by Nicknames; Railing against their mistakes will not confute them, neither will it heal their Sores, to be ever in handling them.

No, it is Found by Experience that False opinions are sooner undermined then battered, and the warm Sun causes the Traveller to lay aside that Cloak, which the Blustering wind could never have forced from him.

Make use of Knowledge rather than shew of it, lest thou prejudice the more sober and understanding persons against thee, by giving them too Just cause to believe, that thou art studying more to gain applause, then to do good; Some, while they affect to seem learned, make themselves Ridiculous, yea, and nauseous too, while they vomit up, as it were, amongst the People their crude Matters, which, if they had been throughly digested into strength of reason, would have made the Consciences of People feel, that they do understand themselves; So, while they seek credit, they miss it, and also oft times render weighty matter inefficacious by Intermixing Dilute stuff with it, which Weakens the Force of it.

Let us thus set our selves to preserve Knowledge, and Knowledge shall preserve, yea, advance us, God himself will own us, wipe away

our

our reproach and secure our interest, and every way bless us; People shall owne us, and readily hear us, Chearfully submit to us in the Lord, heartily bless God for us; And we shall either see *of the Travell of our Souls* amongst them, *and be Satisfied*, or however we shall know that *our Judgement is with the Lord, and our work with our God, though Israel be not gathered, and great shall be our reward in Heaven.*

Proverbs

Proverbs, 3. 5. 6.

Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart and leane not unto thine underſtanding: In all thy wayes Acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths.

THis Book was writ by one of great naturall parts, who had all imaginable advantages, whereby to improve them to the height, beſides thoſe Supernaturall Endowments of Knowledge and wiſdom, he begg'd of God and obtained. It containes in it ſeverall uſefull directions, learned and tryed by Experience, for the ordering of ones wayes in the fear of God, with diſcretion, ſo as to decline the ſnares of this preſent life, comfortably to wade through all its troubles, profitably to make uſe of all the Occurrences of it; ſo as daily to get ground of Corruption, to grow in purity and Heavenly mindedneſs, fear of, Love to, faith in God, ſubmiſſion to him, meekneſs and holineſs of heart, ingenuity and goodneſs towards men, to provide for and make ſure of peace, Joy and Glory to the Soul, unto all eternity.

In the begining of this Chapter he ſalls upon his

his instructions with a winning insinuating compellation, a temper expressing much tender Love, and serious care; *My Son.* He enforces them with very powerfull perswasions from the reall advantages, they bring along with them. If a long Comfortable and honourable life be of any worth, the rules, which point out the certain way to these, are of weight.

But what are these? In generall Two.

1. Make Conscience of all thy ways, and keep thine heart Continually in Exercise, to find out what is thy duty in every particular case, that thou mayest set about the serious practice of it. *Vers.* 3. Know that mercy and truth, goodness & reality are the main things, ye ought to addict your selves unto, you must get your hearts purged, your lives Reformed from all malice, and guile, filled and adorned with what ever is akin to tender Love and honest sincerity.

But how shall one know what is Duty, and what will really promote mercy and truth in the heart and life?

This is wisely inquired, for one may be easily mistaken, though one never so truly desire to Act every way for the best, In order hereunto, that may seem to be the best, which will not really prove so, and therefore it is not good to be too Confident of ones own apprehensions, to lean to ones own understanding. What but if I may not trust my own Judgment, what other light have I to steer my selfe by? Would you have

me

me to act rashly, or follow my lusts? No, there is no necessity for that neither, though thine Understanding be shallow and easily Imposed upon, Gods is not so, he is able to give thee a true and through information, what thou maiest, what thou oughtest to do, what is most convenient for thee so that, though being left to thy self thou easily mayest do Foolishly, nay, it is an hundred to one but thou wilt, yet being instructed and directed by him, there is no fear, but thou wouldest do otherwise. Yea, but the question is not, whether God be able to satisfy what is fit to be done in every case whatsoever, but whether he will or no? There is no doubt of that neither, do but thou trust him, and he will direct thee. Ye have.

1st. A word of sober counsell to all who desire to Act for the best at all times, especially in difficult cases, and such as are of Importance too, where observe 3. Things 1st. To place all thy Confidence in God, as having a through Knowledge of all Circumstances, wisdome to discerne conveniencies and inconveniencies, and to order things accordingly, goodness to give wholsome Advice to those, who desire it, faithfully to make use of all his skill, power and interest for the advantage of those that trust in him.

2ly. To be cautious how thou so much as leanest to, much less wholly Relyest on, thine own understanding: how thou presumest to act because thou thinkest all is lawfull, right, good, fit, not being

being ſenſible how Ignorant and Fooliſh thou art, how unable to diſcerne or Judge, not being aware, how many Conveniencies or Inconveniencies may be concealed from thee, how many miſrepreſented, how many miſapprehended and misjudged; although thou haſt helped thine own underſtanding, as much as may be, by taking the Advice of thoſe, who are the moſt apprehenſive, Experienced, Judicious, reall and faithfull, yea and ſomewhat ſought God too in the caſe, as being a little diſtruſtfull of thine own Knowledge, prudence, intelligence, and that of others too, 3. To acknowledge, to lay it down to thine own Soul as an Undoubted Truth, that buſineſs will not be carried on, with thy will, thy muſt and ſhall; It ſhall not be according to thy wiſhes, and deſires, be they never ſo vehement, not according to thy Contrivances and deſignes, be they never ſo ſure laid, ſo cloſely purſued; *But the Counſell of the Lord ſhall ſtand, and his pleaſure ſhall proſper.*

2*ly*. A word of ſuteable encouragement, to induce unto the embracing of this counſell. Men Dubious what to do, and uncertain of Events, eſpecially in matters of concernment, are deſirous of two things.

1*ſt*. To be determined what to do.

2*ly*. Reſolved, what to expect. Both theſe are aſſured in this caſe of truſting.

1*ſt*. They ſhall be directed what to do.

2*ly*. Proſpered and their way made plain.

And

And that with a double advantage.

1*ſt*. They ſhall not onely have a Generall direction as to their way, but even a particular one as to their path, their endeavours ſhall not onely Succeed as to the main, but as to the manner too, they ſhall come at it in the way, they do deſire.

2*ly* Their direction ſhall not onely be ſuch as may ſerve, But it ſhall be the beſt, that could be wiſhed or hoped for, ſuch as the wiſe, good & faithfull God can give; their ſucceſſe will not be ſuch as may Content onely, but ſuch as will Satiſfie, ſuch as they ſhall not know, how to wiſh amended.

Doct. It is the duty and Concernment of the People of God, to relie on the Lord for counſell and ſucceſſe in every thing, they ſet about. The words run either in the form of Command, or of Counſell: here is double emphaſis to be taken notice of.

1*ſt*, *with all thine heart*, Look thou unto the Lord, without any doubt or fear, as one able to Adviſe thee for the beſt, to proſper thine endeavours, & willing and ready too. Suffer no thoughts to Ariſe in thee, as ſhall dare to queſtion, whether he either can or will.

2*ly*, *in all thy wayes*, not only in matters of greateſt concernement, but even in thoſe of ſmall importance: Not onely in Affairs of difficult reſolution, where thou thyſelfe art at a nonplus, but even in thoſe of greateſt evidence and facility,

where

where every one almost is ready to presume, he is wise enough to advise himself.

What is it to trust in the Lord? It is,

1st. To be perswaded, the Lord is able to counsell thee, what thou Lawfully mayest do, what thou necessarily oughtest to do in the business thou art about, whatever it be. He knowes thee and all thy Circumstances, understands what will more or less please or Cross thee, what will promote thy spirituall and eternall welfare, what impede it. Hee sees what is for the present, he sees what probably may be, what certainly will be, if he prevent it not. All this he knowes throughly and none else, not the quickest, the most Experienced, the most observant, not he that has the greatest Advantages to prie. God is able to prosper thy Endeavours, so as they may best make for thy true content, thine everlasting welfare. He can blast or succeed enterprizes, incline hearts this way or that way, as he pleases, turn them to what they are most Averse from, take them of from what they are most bent upon, he can cast in obstacles, or remove them; all these, and many of the Like nature, are easy with him, he has Wisdome, Power, authority, wayes, instruments enough to incourage unto the vse of the means, he directs to, notwithstanding the severall difficultyes, which Present themselves, by either shewing or hinting the ways, how they may be declined or overcome.

2ly. That he is very willing and ready to give wholesome

wholesome Advice (for I shall not mention the other two particulars, which are not so plainly in the text) to those that need it, desire it, Relie upon him for it; To represent unto him conveniencies and inconveniencies, this way and that way; To shew him which are more considerable, which like to last, which like to increase, which like to lessen and vanish; to give him a true discerning, and a right Judgment in all things, so that, what he resolves upon, the Course he shall take, shall be no way prejudiciall to him, as to his convenient Comfort, and reall welfare, every way Advantageous, *Thou hast found him good, thou hast heard he is good, thou Beleevest him to be so, one that Considers what may grieve or please, hurt or help the least of his little ones; one that Loves not to Suffer any of his People inconsiderately to plunge themselves into any Sorrow or trouble, they have no need of; to run upon any Snare or danger, which he cannot bring them through without losse.*

3*ly*. To look unto God for Counsell in the case; Out of a reall sense, the business, we have in hand, needs to be managed with wisdome, especially when it is of difficulty and importance: for the best wisdome of a Creature, the most Improved and deliberate is not to be trusted to, but shortsighted, easily imposed upon, subject to mistakes. Be therefore often lifting up the heart to him in Sincere breathings, earnest desires for his Counsell.

4*ly*. To rest quietly, in a confident Expectation of seasonable directions from him, notwithstanding the perplexity of the Case, our own present darkness, and irresolution; Making it our only care and endeavour to walk before him in the uprightness of our heart, and to do those things which are most pleasing in his eyes.

Now thus to trust in the Lord, is

1*st*. The duty of Gods people, what they ought to do, and they safely may. He is both able to counsell, none like him, *a wonderful Counseller*, *Es.* 9. 6. He is furnished with Knowledge, Wisdome, Faithfullness, he sees, observes, considers, understands all things with their consequences and causes: he is engaged to Counsell, his goodness engages him, this will not suffer poor ones hoodwinked to run upon their own ruine; His truth engages him, he must be as good as his word; He has promised to *guide the meek &c. Psal*, 25. 12. *To bring the Blind by a way, they know not &c. Es.* 42. 16. *Thine eare shall heare a word behind thee &c. Es.* 30. 21. He has used to Counsell and help, *he is unto us wisdom.*

2*ly*. They necessarily must, he Commands them to do it. *If any lack wisdome, let him aske it of God, Jam.* 5. He blames them, that they will not, *but my People would not hearken, Ps.* 81. 11. *They would have none of my Counsell, Prov.* 1. 30. *Woe to them, that take Counsell, but not of me &c. Es.* 30. 1.

3*ly*.

3*ly*. Accordingly we find it has been the practice of Gods People, the Children of *Israel*, *Judges* 20. 18. 23. 28. Of *David*, 1. *Sam.* 23. 2. 11.

4*ly*. Nay, even wicked men enquire of him as *Saul*, 1. *Sam.* 28. 6. *Ahab*. 4. *Kings*. 22. 5. 6.

5*ly*. Neglect of this has brought inconveniencies, *Joshua*, 9. 14.

But why is it a duty?

1*st*. Every one is bound to order his affaires the best he can, to the reall and eternall advantage of his Soul; Which he cannot do without the Counsell of God, who alone is able to discerne what make for or against this: And this he is not to expect without seeking for, and none will truly seek for it, that do's not trust in the Lord for it. We little know, how much depends upon a seeming small matter; How far we may lose our selves, by going a little wrong; What hazards we may run not onely of our Comforts, but of our happyness, by a little folly, a small Neglect of wisdom, how deare it may cost us.

2*ly*. It is a doing God right, owning his wisdome, that he is the onely wise God, only able throughly to direct, to give us wholsome Counsell, and also own his Goodness, that he may be relyed upon, his Advise Followed without dispute or danger, obeying the call of his providence, when we know not what to

do, yet to have our eyes towards him. God oft brings his People into labyrinths, where they cannot get well in, or out, that they may the more Earneſtly apply themſelves to him for direction.

3*ly*. It is following the inclination of a gracious heart, which has been taught all along the deſperate folly and weakneſs of the Creature, and trained up to live upon the Wiſdome and power of God.

It is our Concernment too. for

1*ſt*. Without good Counſell, we ſhall not be able to order our affaires ſo, as to decline thoſe cares, Troubles, ſnares and temptations, which will very much hinder us in the way to true life, Righteouſneſs, peace, and Joy. And this is the main thing we ought to have Speciall care of, we have many matters to reſolve on in our lives, upon which do's Exceedingly depend the comfort and welfare of our Souls; Which we may eaſily order ſo, out of our own ignorance or folly, as to gain to our ſelves everlaſting occaſion of repentance. I might inſtance in ſome particulars, but I ſhall chuſe rather to leave it to your underſtanding.

2*ly*. There is no Counſell ſafe, but what we have from God, upon ſerious ſeeking to him for direction, endeavouring to get our hearts brought wholly to this paſſe, to deſire nothing, but what may be at leaſt Conſiſtent with the good of our own Souls, and of our Brethren

if

if not subservient to it. We may easily deceive our selves, and may be deceived by others, but God neither can nor will deceive us, if we do but with honest hearts say, *Lord, teach us to do thy will.* Nay, it is usuall with God, to bring to naught the wisdome of the wise, and when they trust in their own discretion, or that of others, They will then play the fool egregiously.

3*ly.* However none are like to be so every way advantageous as those that ask Counsell of God, men may stumble upon such Advice as possibly may do no great harm, But is an hundred to one whether it may do any great good, they think it is Fair, if they secure the Main; their narrow eye, can but fix upon one or two particulars, cannot survey altogether, cannot see so far as the tendencies of matters with clearness, much less foresee the results and Consequences; But Gods allseeing eye throughly discernes all Circumstances, all that are, all that will be; his Searchingmind enquires and considers, what is not only for the main chance, but what for each ones interest, not onely what is safe, what good, but what is best; Not onely what is best for those primarily and principally concerned, but even for all others, who should be considered.

As this is our duty and Concernment at all times, so most of all in some Particular cases as.

1*st.* In matters of difficulty, where conveniencies and Inconveniencies on either side are apparent enough, But what is the most Con-

siderable, it is not so easy to resolve, no, not when we have most seriously debated in our own thoughts, & deliberately consulted with others.

2ly. In matters of consequence.

1st. When many are concerned, not only we our selves, but others, and that no few, and those whom our Affections and duties incline, and oblige us to consider.

2ly. And that nearely, when not only the Chief comforts of this life come under debate (which are not altogether inconsiderable) and those concerned, not at a distance neither; But also the everlasting Joyes of Heaven.

3ly. Lastingly, when whatever is done, be it Advantageous or prejudiciall, cannot be mended, but must continue.

Vse. 1st. Then they do not onely sinfully, but foolishly, Who do not wholly Trust in the Lord for direction in their affaires.

As 1st, Those who Act rashly, rash upon matters they have a mind to, little caring, whether this be lawfull, of good report, convenient, but like beasts led by sense.

2ly, Who consult, but not with the Lord, but either with their own lusts, their pride, their Covetousness, their Spite &c. Asking them what they would have done, or with their own understandings, they pore and think, lose one thought upon another, not knowing and Considering, man's thoughts are Altogether Vanity. Or with

others

others whom they esteem and Confide in, not considering that ignorance on the one hand and interest on the other may make them give none of the best counsell.

3*ly*. Who enquire of the Lord, but stay not for an Answer from him, go on before they know whether he do's allow of it, approve of it, they be onely perswaded in their hearts, the Lord would have them to doe thus and no otherwise, Just like *Pilate*, St. *John*, 18. 39. Who asks what is truth, and never expects an Answer.

4*ly*. Who stay for the Counsell of God, but take it not, follow it not, as the *Jewes Jer*. 32. 3. *c*. 43. 2.

Use. 2. Do then in all cases what duty and interest obliges thee to, trust in God for direction, do what the holy ones of God use to doe, make him thy Oracle, Counsell, Guide, this will make most for thy true comfort, thy reall advantage, he will direct thee, either Clearly shew thee what is most convenient for thee, or at least effectually incline thee to what is best; enabling thee to trust him with thy selfe in it, though otherwise thou hast many seeming grounds of fear, thou art bringing mischief upon thy selfe, he has no designes which interfere with thine, Therefore First goe to him for Counsell, say with *David*, *Psal*. 143. 10. *Teach me to do thy will, lead me, guide me. I am Foolish, apt to mistake my selfe, easily deceived by others, thou knowest my frame, my Circumstances, how it is every way with me,*

Thou knoweſt what *I can bear, what I have need of, what will do me good, what will make for my Comfort; O Suffer me not to do any thing which may be prejudiciall to my own Soul, which will make me loſe Communion with thee, forfeit thy favour, provoke thee to leave me to my ſelf, to the humours or Faſhions of men.* And that you may ſpeed, labour to bring your Soules to this, not to deſire worldly advantage to your ſelves in what ever you are about, but onely that ye may be kept in the feare of God, in the wayes of Holineſs, and Righteouſneſs and truth, ſo as to grow in grace, to overcome your ſelves and the World, how you may be in a way of pleaſing, Honouring and Serving him, relieving and bettering your Brethren; For if you come onely to learn what will make moſt for your eaſe and pleaſure in the fleſh, to make you rich and great in the World, to procure you outward proſperity and ſecurity; this is not to ask counſel of the Lord, this is a great abomination in his ſight; and ye have cauſe to fear, the Lord may ſay of you, as of the *Iſraelites, Ezechi.* 14. 34. *Shall I be enquired of at all by them? I the Lord will Anſwer him that cometh, according to his Idolls.*

2*ly*. Stay for his Counſel, ſettle upon no reſolution one way or other, before the Lord have in ſome meaſure given you to underſtand, what will be for the good of your Soules, and thoſe about you; perſwade you in your hearts, that this rather then the other, is ſo

3*dly* See

3*ly*, See you follow it, ſtand and act in it, when the Lord has perſwaded you, that this or the other is for the good of your Souls; be not ſwayed to the contrary by any wordly conſiderations whatſoever; be not moved one way or other by conveniencies or inconveniences.

But may not one be herein miſtaken? Yes very eaſily.

1*ſt*. If they do not ſincerely deſire to underſtand what is for the good of the Soul, that they may follow that, what ever it be, though it do not ſo much agree with their inclinations.

2*ly*. If they do not heartily rely upon God for right information. But where neither of theſe are wanting; God neither can, nor will, ſuffer you to be miſtaken.

But we cannot well reſolve what is for the Souls good.

Then you muſt ſuſpend, wait upon God, till he ſatisfy you. Till you follow the leading and guiding of God, ye are not ſafe. If you run before him, or turn out of his way, thank your ſelves if you miſcarry.

3*ly*. No wonder that there is ſuch a generall miſcarriage of People in matters of higheſt concernment; when there is ſo much aiming at particular ends, conſulting with the cuſtoms of the World; the maxims of vulgar prudence, our own vain imaginations, vain opinions of others; and ſo little conſidering what may promote the well-

fare

fare of the Soul unto all eternity, seeking to, and relying upon the only wise God, the God of Judgment for his directions.

4ly. Never expect to prosper, to do discreetly, when you are not in Gods way, and truly thou art not in the way to learn wisdom, before thou become a Fool in thine own eyes, and discernest the highest wisdom of the World to be foolishness, and utterly dispairest of doing any thing, but playing the fool, unless the Lord teach, guide and direct thee.

5ly. How much are Gods People concerned to keep close unto the Lord, to obey him, to take heed of provoking, displeasing him; seeing it is he, from whom alone safe profitable Counsel is to be expected, when they will find the greatest need of it.

6ly. Humble thy self, if thou hast enterprised any business without asking Counsel of the Lord, considering, that hereby thou hast both slighted God, and been wanting to the concernments of thy Soul.

7ly. Thank God for bringing thee into any difficulty and perplexity, seeing this is the likeliest way to mind thee of thy Duty and concernment, and of putting thee upon it; These are some of the courses God takes to make People know he is the Lord, thou hast no cause to be troubled at such a providence, whereby thou are taught there is need of *being wise in the wisdom of God*, as well as *strong in the power of his might*.

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Mat. 7. 14.

Because strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way which leads unto Life, and few there be that find it.

HAVING discourſed of the firſt ſort of motives, which our Saviour makes uſe of to perſwade Men to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, I am now come to the ſecond ſort.

The firſt ſort of Motives, are taken from Conſiderations of the contrary gate, and way those that lead to Deſtruction, and yet are ſo Wide and Broad, that they have many Entries and Paſſages in them. The Second ſort are taken from Conſiderations had of the Strait Gate and ways, and that either, 1ſt. Of the neceſſity of going in, and going on here.

It is the only Way to Life thus to do, this Way leads to Life, but none elſe does, this Gate brings into this Way of Life, whereas no other Gate does: None can be careleſs whether he make Ingreſs and progreſs here, but he who ſets light by Life, that Life which for permanency and privileges doe exceedingly tranſcend this.

Or,

Or, 2*ly*. Of the difficulty of going in, and going on here.

A threefold difficulty is here mentioned.

1*ſt*. There is a difficulty in finding this Gate, and this difficulty is ſo great, that there are few overcome it. Moſt drop into deſtruction, before they know where the Gate of Salvation lies.

2*ly*. There is a difficulty in entring this Gate when it is found, it being a ſtrait Gate; and ſo not to be entred with any bulk, in any poſture, a Man muſt ſtrip himſelf of all unneceſſary lumber, and compoſe his body into the moſt advantageous poſture, if he would get in at this ſtrait Gate.

3*ly*. There is a difficulty in holding on in the Way, which we have entred into through the Gate, this Way being a narrow Way, ſuch as will not leave us at liberty to do as we liſt, but will confine us within bounds and tye us to good behaviour, ſo that we ſhall be neceſſitated to conform our Steps unto our Ways.

Doct. 1ſt. There is a way which leads unto Life. This is ſo clear a truth, and ſo generall acknowledged, that Chriſt does not think it needfull to prove it, no nor ſo much as to aſſert it neither, he only ſuppoſes there is ſuch a way, all that he does directly aſſert, is touching the narrowneſs of this Way, and the Straitneſs of the Gate, which admits into it. Here we muſt enquire what this Life is, which has a Way to it, what

this

this way is which leads unto this Life, how this Way leads unto this Life.

Quest. 1*st.* What is this Life which has a Way leading to it?

Answer. Man has a double Life

1*st.* A Life of the Body in this World.

2*ly.* A life of the the Soul, which is either inchoat and begun in this World, or consummate and perfect in the other. Now this Life of the Body consists in the conjunction of the Soul and Body together, and exerts its self in natural, vital, Animal operations, whereby we Eat, Drink, and Grow, and Breath, See and Hear, Smell and Feel, and Talk and Walk, *&c.* But this is not the Life which we have to do with here, for we are speaking of a Life which Men generally are without; yea are at a great distance from, and cannot arrive at, but by passing through a long Way, but such a Life is not this present bodily life, for all on this side the Grave have this Life; The life then which we have to Enquire about, is the Life of the Soul, this men are without, unless they be born again to it, and they are but few who are born again, nay men are at a distance from this life, neither prizing this, nor desiring it, nor knowing the way to it. Nay, it is not the life of the Soul while it is yet in the body, this vile body, which we here Enquire after; For though these two lives, that of the Soul here, and that of the Soul hereafter do agree much in their natures and Qualitys, they have

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the ſame ſubject, the immortall Soul, which once was *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins Eph.* 2. 1. The ſame principle, Chriſt, who ſaith of himſelf *Joh.* 14. 6. *I am the way The truth and the Life* whom St. *Paul* profeſſes to be *his Life, Gal.* 2. 20. *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me Col.* 3, 4 *when Chriſt, who is our Life &c.* The ſame effect, influencing upon all the faculties of the Soul to raiſe and enlarge them, bettering both mind and heart, in all their operations; The ſame excellency, putting upon noble deſignes, ſuch as concern the Glory of the great God and the welfare of precious Souls, and furniſhing with Satisfactory delights, ſuch as are the reſult of Gods preſence in the Soul, and the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that according to our power we have kept cloſe to God in obedience; The ſame permanency, neither of them ever having any end, yet theſe two Lives differ much in degrees, more than the life of a man differs from the life of a new born Child, yea, more than the life of a grown man differs from the life of a Child in the womb. It neither has ſuch high operations, nor ſuch high comforts, it is oft ſo ſecret and ſo hardly diſcernable either by the man, who enjoyes it, or by others, that Chriſt rather counts it a tendency to life, than life it ſelf, it is ſo exceedingly below that life which ſhall be, in righteouſneſs, peace, Joy, and Glory the great perfections of this life, that it ſcarce deſerves to bear the ſame name, the life then, which we are here enquiring

quiring of, is the life of the Soul, after it is uneased of the body, this is the great life, whereunto the life of grace received in regeneration serves but as a way, this is that, which all Gods People find & feel a want, yea a need of, which they all pant and breath after, it makes the Soul happy immediately after death, and the body too as well as the Soul soon after the resurrection.

2*ly*. What is this way which leads to this life?

Ans. The way it self is obedience and self-denyal, complying with Gods will and denying our own. It is but going back the same way which man took, when he fell from this life, we had not been to seek for this life, if *Adam* had continued in the state, wherein he was created, had he thus done, both he himself had been confirmed in holiness and Righteousness, and all his posterity after him had probably been born in the same state, but he being Tempted by Satan, closed with the Temptation, and instead of complying with Gods will, gratified his own, and thereby ruined not only himself, but us too. Thus we are told, *by one man Sin entred into the world &c. Rom.* 5. 12.

A double death entred by *Adams* Sin.

1*st*. A death of the Soul as to eternal life; this was the immediate result of his Sin, for by it he did as it were cut his own throat, and thereby utterly stript himself of Spiritual life.

2*ly*. A death of the body as to this Temporal life, this Followed upon his Sin also, yet not so

speedily,

ſpeedily, for the ſeeds of death was only then ſown, which muſt have time to ripen. Now the way to get out of this death, into which we are plunged, and to attain again that life, which we have through Sin and folly loſt, is to take a quite contrary Courſe, and whatever Temptations we have to do with, either from the World or Satan, more to conſider what is Gods will, then our own, and rather to do, what God bids us, than what our own luſts incline us to.

This is the way, the onely way, though Chriſt when inwardly received into the Soul as a new life, is the principle inclining and enabling us to Love, and chuſe, and keep this way; And Faith is the Inſtrument, whereby we Receive Chriſt as a principle of inward life and ſtrength.

Queſt. 3. How do's this way lead to this life?

Anſwer. This obedience and ſelfdenyal has a tendency to advance us unto this life,

1ſt. Not as matter of merit, whereby we deſerve at Gods hands, that he ſhould advance us unto this life. The begger who comes to the door for alms, by coming do's not deſerve it, though without coming, he were never like to get it; That a Creature ſhould merit from God, from whom it has, and to whom it owes, all that it has and is, is both a proud opinion and a ſenſeleſt one alſo; Eſpecially if we conſider in what a pittiful depraved condition man is, in whom this merit is ſuppoſed, and boaſted.

For *1ſt.* Were we born with as great moral perfections

perfections as Adam himself was created with, and did we improue these with the utmoſt care, diligence and Faithfulneſs unto the greateſt advantage, ſo as at no time to omit any duty, or to commit any Sin, yet we ſhould by thus doing do no more, then we were bound to, for we owe our whole beings, and Lives, whatever we are, have and are able to do, unto that God from whom we received them, and by whom we are preſerved in them, And is there any ſo Fooliſh as to fancy, that there can be any great merit in paying of debts?

2ly. As we are darkned in our minds and depraued in our hearts, we neither do nor can do half of that which we ought to do; we either fail in the matter, doing ſomthing which is unfitting to be done, or not doing ſomthing which is fitting to be done, or we fail in the manner, doing what we do, (when we do the beſt) with undue hearts, and for undue ends. So that we are alwayes affronting and provoking God, either by our Sinful omiſſions or Commiſſions, either in the thing practiſed, or Neglected, or in the manner of our Practiſing or Neglecting it; And would it not be an unparalleld impudence in any to claime as due the leaſt reward for ſuch unworthy Carriages, how much leſs ſo great a reward as eternal Life is?

3ly. As we do not do all the good we might, and the good we do, we do not with that exactneſs which we ought, even when we do it in

the greatest Sincerity, so the good we do, it is not we who do it, but the grace of God which is in us, as St. *Paul* Modestly acknowledges, 1. *Cor.* 15. 10. *Not I but the grace of God which was with me.* So that were there never so great merit in the action we have little reason to lay Claime to it, who are at the best but the instrument, God being the principall authour, for this is certain, all the Evil of our Actions is from our selves, and all the good of them from God.

4*ly.* The good which we do, we do rather for ourselves then for God, it is certainly so in the issue, and ordinarily it is so in our intentions. Whether we do well or ill, it neither increases nor lessens Gods happiness *Job.* 35. 6. 7. So that what we do, we doing for our selves, unto whom the advantage of what we do, do's solely redound we have no reason to claime any reward from God, till we can shew what we have done for him. But

2*ly.* As a means whereby we are fitted for this life, such a course is both prescribed by God and has in it self a natural tendency to bring us unto the life which we need and are concerned to seek after, *Psa.* 50. 23. *To him that ordereth his Conversation aright &c.*

By setting our selves about this obedience and selfdenyall.

1*st.* We come to understand really and experimentally how much we are without this life.

For Obedience Would not be so difficult a Task

Task had we that life unto which this is Naturall, we ſhould Love and delight in Obedience were this agreeable unto the frame of our Spirit, and were our wills as Conformable to Gods will, as they ſhould be, and would be, if we were not degenerate; There would be no more room for ſelfdenyal in us then there is for it in Heaven, among Angels and Saints, who find nothing in them to thwart Gods holy, Righteous, and good will. The firſt ſtep unto true life, is to be brought to a ſenſe that we are without it.

2*ly*. We come to underſtand the worth of this life. For we cannot but know that to obey God in his holy and Righteous preſcriptions is very much our duty; we owe this both to God, and to our ſelves, and to our Brethren, and we can never have quiet in our ſelves while our Conſciences teſtify againſt us that we walk contrary to our duty, yet this we ſhall unavoidably do, ſo long as we want that life, which alone can make duty gratefull to us, while we force our ſelves to duty as a thing that we are tasked to, and which we may in no wiſe Neglect, unleſs we will run the hazard of beating for our ſloth, or while duty goes down with us againſt the ſtomack, we meddle with it as People do with Phiſick, which they abhor, yet take to prevent a greater miſchief; while we have no Love to duty, we are in Danger of a double trouble from it, Trouble in Diſcharging it contrary to our Inclinations, trouble in a total Neglecting of it; or a

ſuperficial ſlubbering it over, when our conſcience takes occaſion hence to upbraid us with a want of fear of God, and care of our own Souls. Now thoſe who know how greivous it is ever to lie under one of theſe Troubles, cannot but count that life precious which will totally free us from both, and perfectly reconcile our Conſciences, Inclinations, and duties together, that there ſhall be no jarring among them. And when once we come to know the worth of this life, we are made to Prize, Love, Deſire, and ſeek it.

3*ly*. We Subdue, that which in its being, and workings, is moſt Contrary to this life. That which ties us faſt in Death is our owne luſts, theſe are the cords whereby Satan, and the World do keep us at a diſtance from God the Fountain of life, theſe like mud in the head of a ſpring, cauſe ſuch Obſtructions that a ſource of Living water, though it be Juſt at hand, cannot guſh out.

Now obedience gives a check to theſe luſts, it hinders them from working while it finds the Soul a far different Imployment, it hinders them from thriving by diverting the ſap of the Soul ſome other wayes. While men Neglect Obedience and give the reins unto their luſts, they bring themſelves more under the power of their Luſts, and they have the leſs Command over themſelves, to refuſe doing what their luſts promp them to, neither can they ſo eaſily exert themſelves into their former liberty. But if we deny our luſts and diſcharge duty in ſpite

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of them; we famish them, and thereby weaken them, that they cannot have that Rule in our Souls which formerly they had, and hereby the Soul is more easily to be reduced under the Command of Christ, and under, *The law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ.*

4*ly*. We keep close under the influences of the Quickening Spirit. All life is from God, and the nearer we are to God, the nearer we are to life. Now the distance we are in at any time from God, is not of place, but of state. We cannot possibly be any where, where God is not present, for God *Fills Heaven and Earth, Jer.* 23. 24. But he is not present to us, we have no sensible Experience of his presence in us, because our minds are averse from him; The way then to find and feel the warmth of the Sun of Righteousness is to turn to it, not by Changing our place, but by Changing the posture of our Souls our backs are towards God, while we follow our lusts; then we turn to God when we put our selves in the way of duty.

3*ly*. As a condition upon which God has suspended the giving of life. Eternal life being the gift of God, he may give it out unto whom he pleases, upon what termes he pleases, *Rom.* 6. 23. And that he has made Obedience the termes of Eternal life is evident; Christ tells the young man *Mat.* 19. 17. *If thou wilt enter into life keep the Commandments.* Paul *Saith God will render to every one according to their works, to them who by patient*

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Use. 1ſt. Is there a way to life? then none are excluded by God from Eternal life, seeing God has not set this where it cannot be come at, but has left a way to it, which who ever take cannot miss of Eternal life. There is a way to Eternal life, this way is declared what it is, and how it lies, we are loudly called by God into this way, Continually called by all providences, and Ordinances, Now Therefore if we will not take this way, and for want of taking it ruine our selves, can we say that it is Gods fault that we come short of life? Can we clear our selves either by pretending ignorance as if we knew not the way? *when the Lord has shewed thee O man what is good And what do's the Lord by God require of thee &c. Mic. 6. 8.* Or by pleading Impotence we could not walk in it, this cannot be, for if it be a way

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it must be passable; And though we cannot walk in this way of our selves, by our own strength, yet by the help of God we may, and God is Never backward Seasonably to give in Convenient help to those who heartily desire it of him.

4ly. Is there a way to life? let every one take heed how they come short of life, had mans case been desperate, and now that he has once fallen from life, there were no more possibility of his return to it again, then there is for the Devils, there being no way left to life for them, it would have been a troubling our selves to no purpose, should we have striven to get to life.

What use could there be of any cares or Endeavours in such a case?

All would have been superfluous. But now that there is a way to life, a way opened to us by the Blood of Christ, and we may attain to life if we do but for our selves what we might, and ought, we are greatly concerned to look to it, that we come not short of life for all this, through our own unbelief, carelesness and sloth. It is sad to lose life and to be utterly and everlastingly undone for want of it; But it will be far sadder to lose it, when it has been prepared and offered; a way has been made to it, and the way declared, and we called into it. Be the good never so Valuable that we come short of, the Evil never so Intolerable, that we are plunged into, yet if the one could not be by us

attained, the other could not be by us avoided, we Comfort our ſelves with this; that how greivous ſoever our Sufferings be, yet it could not be helped. But as the caſe is here, if we loſe life, and plung our ſelves into an endleſs Death, we ſhall be vtterly deprived even of this Comfort; we can never be able to ſay, that it could not be helped, there was no Remedy, it could never be otherwiſe then it is. No, then we ſhall be made to Remember, and to Acknowledge that it might have been far otherwiſe, we might have been as full of Happineſs, as we are now of Miſery, had we but taken the right way, and that we Miſſed the way, was not ſo much Ignorance, as Willfulneſs, or at the beſt Careleſſneſs.

This is that which will make Hell-fire burne hotter, and its pains Torment more intolerably, when we are made to Remember what Fair warnings we had againſt it, how we were told that the way we took was the ready Road to it, how we were ſeriouſly invited, and that frequently into another way, which we were aſſured would lead us into a ſtate of as great Bleſſedneſs as we were capable of.

Doct. 2. The Entrance into the way of life is through a Gate, a ſtrait Gate. If yo ask what Gate is this, it is the Gate of Regeneration, for this is the paſſage through which we turne out of the way of deſtruction, into the way of Salvation, while we are in our old nature, our motions

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are Earth-ward, and Hell-ward, for that way do our Inclinations lead us; But when we have attained a new nature, a divine nature, our bent is altered, and by this we are carried Heaven-ward, and God-ward, our outward man is kept within bounds by the Law, and our inward man is Enlarged, and Raised, carried towards those things which are Spiritual, and Eternal, by the Spirit.

Qu. But what is Regeneration, which is the Gate into the way of life?

It is such an alteration wrought in the Soul by the powerfull operation of Gods Spirit, whereby the Soul which was Dead in Trespasses and sins *Passes from Death to Life 1 Joh.* 3. 14. It comes to have new Senses, new motions: It comes to have different apprehensions from what it had before, Wealth, Honour, Pleasures, it counted things of Worth and use, now it looks upon them but as vanity and vexation, the ways of Sin it looked upon as wayes of Credit, and Delight, now it can see nothing in them but sorrow and shame.

The Councells of God it did despise, as advising it to its prejudice, now it esteems them as the most advantageous; The anger of God it slighted, as a thing which onely Melancholy Fools feared, now it cannot think of it without dread: Grace it looked upon as an Inglorious, useless thing, now it Esteems it most Honourable, most Serviceable. It comes to have different affections from

from what it had before, as its light is Changed, ſo is its liking, it has new Objects for its Love, Deſire, Hope, Delight, for its Hatred, Fear, Anger, Greife. Other things, other perſons, other occaſions raiſe theſe from what did before.

Qu. But what makes Regeneration to be a ſtrait Gate?

Anſwer. 1*ſt.* It has difficulty in it which cannot be Maſtered by any power within us, but requires a power above us. No leſs power is requited to raiſe us from the Death of ſin, to the life of Faith, then was exerted on Chriſt to raiſe him from the Dead, *Ephe.* 1. 19. 20. In Regeneration, we are raiſed aboue our ſelves, and we have not only an impotency to it, but a reluctancy againſt it, we are ſo far from helping forward this work, that we oppoſe and hinder it, we cannot alter our own bent, and Motion, if this be done in us, it muſt be done by one without us, one above us.

2*ly.* It has trouble in it which we cannot beare up under, without much patience; here is the Cutting of the foreskin of the fleſh, which will not be without Wounds and Blood; the plowing up the fallow ground of the heart, which cannot be done without much rending and tearing; Bringing out a man Child unto God, which cannot be without the pangs of the new birth; There is cutting off a Right Hand, plucking out a Right Eye, which can never be done with

our smart. The trouble is occasioned in getting

1st. Seperated from lusts.

2ly. Freed from Satans slavery.

Use. 1st. For Examination; Let us hereby try our selves whether we be in the way to life or no, men generally presume they are, and do not take it well at the Hands of any to Question whether they be or no. To be sure it is the Concernment of all to look to it that they indeed be; But may we not be allowed to ask those who conceit they are got into the way of life, how came they there? What Gate passed they in at to that way? Was it a wide Gate or a strait one? We are told by Christ that the Gate which brings into the way of life is a strait Gate, and sure through such a Gate we cannot get we do not know how. It is very suspicious we are not yet in the way, if we know nothing at all of the straitness of the Gate. If we have not found Difficulty and Trouble in Getting through it; Here it is that the Devil utterly loses his interest in us, if he let us once go we are gone for ever, and will he be consumed quietly to part with his prey? *Shall the strong man armed be dispossessed of his Houſe, Luke.* 11. 21. 22. And can ye think he will come out of his possession without Tearing? Can there be such a great stir between Gods Spirit, and Satan, wherein Satan have possession of the soul, and the soul know nothing of this all the while?

2ly. 2. For Information; Let us strive to know

the greatest Sincerity, so the good we do, it is not we who do it, but the grace of God which is in us, as *St. Paul* Modestly acknowledges, 1. *Cor.* 15. 10. *Not I but the grace of God which was with me.* So that were there never so great merit in the action we have little reason to lay Claime to it, who are at the best but the instrument, God being the principall authour, for this is certain, all the Evil of our Actions is from our selves, and all the good of them from God.

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from what it had before, as its light is Changed, ſo is its liking, it has new Objects for its Love, Deſire, Hope, Delight, for its Hatred, Fear, Anger, Greife. Other things, other perſons, other occaſions raiſe theſe from what did before.

Qu. But what makes Regeneration to be a ſtrait Gate?

Anſwer. 1*ſt.* It has difficulty in it which cannot be Maſtered by any power within us, but requires a power above us. No leſs power is requited to raiſe us from the Death of ſin, to the life of Faith, then was exerted on Chriſt to raiſe him from the Dead, *Ephe.* 1. 19. 20. In Regeneration, we are raiſed aboue our ſelves, and we have not onely an impotency to it, but a reluctancy againſt it, we are ſo far from helping forward this work, that we oppoſe and hinder it, we cannot alter our own bent, and Motion; if this be done in us, it muſt be done by one without us, one above us.

2*ly.* It has trouble in it which we cannot beare up under, without much patience; here is the Cutting of the foreskin of the fleſh, which will not be without Wounds and Blood; the plowing up the fallow ground of the heart, which cannot be done without much rending and tearing; Bringing out a man Child unto God, which cannot be without the pangs of the new birth; Here is cutting of a Right Hand, plucking out a Right Eye, which can never be done without

out

our smart. The trouble is occasioned in getting.

1st. Seperated from lusts.

2ly. Freed from Satans slavery,

Use. 1st. For Examination; Let us hereby try our selves whether we be in the way to life or no, men generally presume they are, and do not take it well at the Hands of any to Question whether they be or no. To be sure it is the Concernment of all to look to it that they indeed be; But may we not be allowed to ask those who conceit they are got into the way of life, how came they there? What Gate passed they in at to that way? Was it a wide Gate or a strait one? We are told by Christ that the Gate which brings into the way of life is a strait Gate, and sure through such a Gate we cannot get we do not know how. It is very suspicious we are not yet in the way, if we know nothing at all of the straitness of the Gate. If we have not found Difficulty and Trouble in Getting through it; Here it is that the Devil vtterly loses his interest in us, if he let us now go we are gone for ever, and will he be contented quietly to part with his prey? *Here the strong man Armed is Dispossest of his House, Luke.* 11. 21. 22. And can ye think he will come out of his possessions without Tearing? Can there be such a great tug betwixt Gods Spirit, and Satan, whether should have possession of the Soul, and the Soul know nothing of this all the while?

Use. 2. For Exhortation; Let us strive to

Enter

Enter in at this Gate, what though it be a ſtrait Gate, not to be paſſed through without difficulty and Trouble, it immediately brings into the way of life; And whoever are got in at this Gate, they are ſure of life, out of danger of Death, I do not ſay that they have attained this Aſſurance, ſo that they are delivered from all Feares of finally miſcarrying forthwith, after they be Regenerate, but this I ſay, they are in a ſure ſtate, whether they think themſelves ſure or they do not. Now that they are entred in at the Gate, brought unto the life of Chriſt; Their Salvation is undertaken by Chriſt himſelf, *who will finiſh that good work which he has already begun, Phil.* 1. 6. That God who has brought us in at the Gate, will bring us on in the way, till he has brought us to the *End of our Hope, the Salvation of our Souls.*

Again. If we be got in at the Gate, we have reaſon to bleſs God for it, both Conſidering the great difficulty of this; the main difficulty of the work of mans Salvation lies in the getting through the ſtrait Gate, and alſo Conſidering the great advantages by this, we are not onely put in a poſſibility or probability of Salvation but even in a certainty of it. That work is begun which God has undertaken to finiſh, in ſpite of all oppoſition that ſhall be made either by luſt within, or Satan and the world without.

Uſe. 3. For Conſolation, who ever have got ſo far as to get beyond the ſtrait Gate, they are

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in the way of life, and need not fear but they shall arrive at the End of this way, life it self; The greatest difficulty is over, what is behind is easy in Comparison. This little which God has done already in bringing through the Gate, and advancing to life, is but an earnest of what God will further do.

Doct. 3. The way of life is a narrow way. To keep in it there is Required.

1*st*. Care that we Observe our way, those who have but a narrow way to go in, may soon Step aside if they take not great heed to themselves.

2*ly*. Industry, that we take pains with our selves to set our steps right, otherwise we shall either sit down in the way, or turn out of the way for sloth.

3*ly*. Patience, That we bear the Trouble which will be Necessarily occasioned to us, by our Continuall care and Industry to know and keep the way.

There will be more need of Patience, upon severall accounts.

1*st*. By reason of the prevailency of corruption, which makes the flesh so vnruly that it will not be kept in the way. It will be both Troublesome to Curb these lusts, and Troublesome to gratify them; by resisting them we Trouble the flesh, by Complying with them we Trouble the Spirit, and the Conscience.

2*ly*. By Impetuousness of Temptations, from the

the World, and Satan, wherby we are Vehemently ſollicited to do ſomething which we cannot do with freedome of Spirit, it ſuiting not the inward frame which God has ſet our Souls in, or we dare not do, for fear of provoking God, and violating our own Conſcience.

3*ly*. By preſſure of afflictions, which the Lord do's variouſly Exerciſe his People with in this way, for the Mortifying their luſts, the practiſing of their graces, that they may live in a ſenſe of their own Sinfulneſs, weakneſs, Apprehenſive of the Worlds ſcorn, and Malice, raiſed by Faith to Expect Comfort, and Help from God, in a time of need, maugre the World and Hell.

4*ly*. By the diſcomforts of deſertion, when we are left wholy in the dark, without any comfort, Feeling nothing but Corruption ſtirring in us, not one ſprout of Grace to be Diſcerned: The Soule much in doubt whether ever theſe dry bones ſhall live again.

Vſe. 1*ſt*. They know not the way to life who think to get to Heaven with eaſe, our Saviour tells us its a Narrow way, and we may aſſure our ſelves ſo we ſhall find it, and therefore we had need to be well provided with Faith, and patience to carry us through it.

2*ly*. Thoſe who doubt whether they be in the way of life, becauſe they meet with a deal of Trouble, and Perplexety in it, they diſcourage themſelves from that which they have reaſon to take the greateſt Encouragement from; When

we

we are told before hand that the way of life is a Narrow way, a Rough way, if we found the way we were in to be Broad, and plain, we had then Reason to Suspect that we had missed our way, for Christ did not so discribe the way of life to us. But when we find our way narrow and Rough, a way wherein we meet with many Sorrows, many Feares, much Wearineſs, we have reason to say with our selves, sure this is the very way which Christ told us of.

3*ly*. Those who find little Narrowneſs in the way they are in, have great reason to question whether they be in the way to life or no. None who have travelled in that way did ever tell us that it was such a soft, and easy way, but rather it is such a way as the Jsraelites walked in, through the Wilderneſs, where they were Exposed to many dangers from Serpents, Wild Beasts, Enemies, where they were p nched with, many neceſſities, want of Drink, Meat for themselves and theirs, Exercised with many greivances, weary Travellings, Toilsome Fightings Tedious Diſtempers.

4*ly*. Let none think it Fooliſh to keep this way; because it is a Narrow Troubleſome way it is a dark Melancholy way, when the worſt that can be, has been said against it, its still the way of life. No getting to life but this way, no losing life while we keep in this way. Better be in this Narrow way to life, then in the Broad way to Deſtruction.

Doll.

Doct. 4. Few find the Gate to this way. Few see the Necessity of passing through Regeneration, for the getting to Heaven, though this be the main Subject of Christs Doctrine, the main thing insisted on by the Apostles in their Preaching and writing. The most dream of getting saved by their own Observances of the law, by their civility, morality, Religion; But they are not come to see, find, and feel, that they are void of the true life, that there is no reall love in them to God, their brethren, themselves, that if they die in this Condition, how specious soever their outsides be, they must of necessity perish. Few come to know.

1*st*. That they need Regeneration.

2*ly*. That if ever they be Regenerate God must Regenerate them.

The reason of their not finding.

1*st*. Is the great Spiritual Blindness men are under.

2*ly*. The strong delusions of Satan which men are deceiued by.

3*ly*. The Varieties of cares and Pleasures which men are taken up with, and so diverted from Inquiring into their present state.

Vse. No wonder that most go Confidently out of the World, though they have all their life long walked in the broad way of Destruction, Alass they never so much as came to see, that there was a strait Gate to be passed through before they get to Heaven.

2*ly*.

3*ly*. If we be brought to see that we are without Regeneration, and there is great need we get Regenerated, we are brought to that which the most come short of, for few find the Gate. Yet we must take heed of Resting here, for though we find the Gate, unless we enter in at it, we are like to be excluded Heaven. It is not finding our selves to need Regeneration, but getting to be Regenerated, that will save us. *Tit.* 3. 5. 1. *Pet.* 3. 21.

Obj. But have we power to Enter in at this Gate, and to keep in this way? If it be in our power what is become of the grace of God, and its Effecacy in all Spirituall motions? if it be not in our power, how will it be our Sin not to do that which is not in our power to do, or our duty to do more then we can?

Anſ. By our own strength we are not able to Enter in at the Gate, nor to keep in the way, for both Regeneration, and a Holy Life are from the Grace of God, every new born Christian may say with St. *Paul by the Grace of God I am what I am* 1. *Cor.* 15. 10. Whoever are saved from their Corruptions, are saved by Faith, and this men have not of themselves, but from Gods grace *Ephe.* 2. 8. *For by grace are ye saved through Faith* &c. *whoever deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, They do it by the Teachings of grace, *Tit.* 2. 12. and were there no strength to enable us through

Christ to do these things, which we are not able to do of our selves, it would be no Sin in us to omit them.

Now this being premised, we say its true, we cannot Regenerate our selves. that any *are born of God* is no more to be Imputed unto their own will, then to the will of any other man whatsoever he be, *John.* 1. 13. Neither being Regenerate can we of our selves live according to the grace Received, we can do nothing further then we have *Christ strengthening us Phil.* 4. 13. But though we cannot Regenerate our selves, yet we may do that without which God will not Regenerate us, we may use meanes of grace, Read good Books, hear good Sermons, Meditate on what we Read or hear, Endeavour to pray to God for his Grace, do every thing which we are convinced to be our duty as well as we can; We may omit something which if we do not omit, God will not Regenerate us; we need not unless we will, dispise the Means of grace, we need not unless we will, affront Conscience, we need not deride the Instructions and reproofs of Ministers and others, we need not abuse common Grace Received, we need not refuse Common Grace offered, we need not turn from the light of the Spirit, nor Quench the motions of the Spirit: the Swearer need not Swear unless he will, nor the Reviler Revile unless he will, Nor the Drunkard drink himself Drunk &c. For all grant, that man as weak as he hath made himself,

hath

hath ſtill an abſolute Command over his outward Members; And we find that the preſence of a man of Wiſdome, piety, and gravity, or the fear of ſome Temporall Puniſhment, ſo long as they continue, are ſufficient to reſtrain from theſe Extravaganci's even ſuch as are extreamly bent on them; And why ſhould not the awe of God and fear of Hell have as powerful influences upon men as to the Civilizing them, and keeping them from downright profaneneſs, and Immoralliti's; and though we cannot of our ſelves lead a holy Life, ſo as to Avoyd all Scandalous Sins, and to diſcharge the main dutys which are incumbent on us, yet we may do as I have here mentioned and that.

1*ſt*. Through the grace Received, which will be more or leſs operative, as we more or leſs Exite it, and comply with it: and as it is our duty to ſtir up *the gift and Grace of God in us*, 2. *Tim.* 1. 6. So it is in our power; as we ſee its an eaſy thing for any to make of a little ſpark, a great flame by adding fewell to it, and blowing it.

2*ly*. Through grace offered, for God is ready to give more grace unto thoſe who make a good uſe of the grace which they have already Received, according to that promiſs *to him that hath ſhall be given* &c. *Mat.* 26. 29.

To conclude men generally muſt needs be making great haſt to Diſtruction, Conſidering with what

eagarneſs they go on in the way they are in, and that way cannot be the way of Life, for they never paſſed through the ſtrait Gate, nay they are ſo far from having done this, that they have not ſo much as found it.

O that men were brought to this! to ſay few find the way of Life; and to fear that there is danger they may not be of thoſe few, when as yet they are little Troubled with their Condition.

Mat.

Mat. 7. 21.

Not every one that ſaith unto me Lord, Lord, ſhall Enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; But he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.

CHriſt having ſhewed the difficulty of Salvation, telling us that it is not attained unto, but by entering in at the *Strait Gate, walking in the narrow way*; And minded us of the danger of being deluded by falſe Prophets, ſo far as by them to be perſwaded that Salvation may be had upon far eaſier Termes; He here proceeds to informe us plainly what is abſolutely neceſſary to be done by us as ever we deſire or hope to be ſaved.

There is no leſs then a *Kingdome* to be enter'd into, yea ſuch a *Kingdome* as for Peace and plenty Security and Righteouſneſs, Joy, Glory, and ſtability, is not to be parallel'd on Earth, its a *Kingdome of Heaven*. Now if any think to Enter into this *Kingdome* by a Complementall profeſſion, be this profeſſion never ſo ſpecious, they will find

themselves grosly mistaken, for no less then an Vniversall complyance with *Gods will*, is required and Expected to fit for this.

In the words we have.

1*st*. A supposition of a blessed state, which is not only to be veiwed at a distance, but Enter'd into;

The height of Earthly happiness is a *Kingdome*, in which their are delights to gratify the most Voluptuous, Riches to satiate the most Covetous, honours to content the most ambitions, but here is a Better, Higher, surer *Kingdome* then any is to be found in this vain vncertaine miserable World, *a Kingdome of Heaven.*

2*ly*. An opposition of a dangerous mistake which do's too commonly prevail; men oft fancy that this *Kingdome* may be well Enough enter'd into by a formall professing themselves to be the Servants of God, wheras in very deed, though men profess this never so much, again and again, both before God and man, if there be nothing else done by them they shall in no wise Enter into this *Kingdome.*

3*ly*. A position of those termes which are Necessarily required from those who shall be admitted to Enter, those who *do the will of their Heavenly Father may enter into this Kingdome, the none else can.*

Doct. *There is a Kingdome of Heaven to be Entered into.*

There is a double Kingdome of Heaven.

1*st*,

1ſt. A Kingdome of Heaven on Earth, which is a ſtate of Righteouſneſs with inward peace and Joy, *Rom.* 14. 17. *The Kingdome of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteouſneſs and peace and Joy* &c.

2ly. A Kingdome of Heaven in Heaven, which is a ſtate of happineſs where the Righteouſneſs Peace and Joy are conſummated *Luke.* 13. 29. Men from all Quarters ſhall ſit down in this *Kingdome* of God.

Both theſe *Kingdomes* may be Enter'd into, that of Grace may 2. *Pet.* 1. 11. *By giving diligence to make the calling ſure, an enterance is Adminiſterd abundantly into this*, That of Glory may, Chriſt will ſay at the Laſt day unto thoſe who are fitted for it, *Enter into the Kingdome prepared for you Mat.* 25. 34. It matters not whether of theſe Kingdomes we here underſtand, for theſe two ſo far as the Soul is concern'd in them, differ only in degrees; there are the ſame Ingredients in both, the ſame *Righteouſneſs*, the ſame *Peace*, the ſame *Joy*, only *here* they are in *Obſcurity*, *there* they are in *Glory*; Here they are little, not fully grown, There they are great, arrived to their Compleat ſtature; Here they are mix'd, Righteouſneſs with Corruption, *Peace* with trouble, *Joy* with Heavineſs, There they are altogether pure; And he who has enter'd into the one, is ſure to Enter into the other.

Qu. But why is this ſtate of Righteouſneſs with the *Peace* and *Joy* attending it Called a *Kingdome*?

Anſ. The reaſon is not ſo much taken from the reſemblance it has to a worldly *Kingdome*, as if it were the deſigne of the Holy Ghoſt to allure unto a love of this, ſuch as are hugely taken with the Riches and Glory of *Kingdomes* here below; For indeed thoſe who are admiring and prizing thoſe Vanities which make up the Deceitfull happineſs of Earthly *Kingdomes*, can never underſtand much leſs prize and Love that Bleſſed ſtate whoſe Chief *Happineſs* Conſiſts in *Holineſs* and the conſequence of it, call it by what name you pleaſe.

As from its having in it ſelf the Reallity of a *Kingdome* for.

1*ſt*. God is here in his *Kingdome*, all the Faculties of a mans Soul, and all the Members of his Body being brought into ſubjection unto God, and all the Rebell luſts being ſubdu'd and Deſtroy'd; So that now God's will is done in and by the man, as it is in and by the Holy and Bleſſed Angels.

2*ly*. Man is here in his *Kingdome*, he has got now from under the laſh of Conſcience, which do's no more Condemn him, from under the power of luſts, which no more Tyrannize over him, above the Temptations of the World, which now Reach him not, above the Suggeſtions of Satan, which now no more inſtigate him.

Why is this called the Kingdome of Heaven.

Becauſe God dos here in a very gracious and Glorious manner manifeſt himſelf, and as the Court

Court is there where the King is, be it where it will, so Heaven is where ever God is.

But are you sure that Heaven may be Enter'd into.

Yes, for otherwise,

1ſt. All the promises of God would be deceitfull, yea God by them would deceive those whom he is most obliged to deal faithfully with, because they do Confidently Relie on his Truth and goodness, what God do's in plain termes speak out St. *Luke* 12. 32. *It is your Fathers pleasure to give you the Kingdome*, that he in most of his promises hints at, when he uses other Termes. The Gospel is made up of promises chiefly, for what ever is required of us as duty, that is required of us by the Law, now we are told what the main Subject of the Gospel is, its the Kingdome of God, therfore the Gospel has its Denomination from hence, *Mark* 1. 14. *The Gospel of the Kingdome of God*, This was the chief thing which Christ preached before his Death, *Mat.* 4. 17. He had told them there was *A Kingdome of God* to be got, it was not far off but *at Hand*, this he Chiefly Inculcated after his Resurrection, *Act.* 1. 3. *Speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdome of God.*

2ly. Many of the Commands of God Would be Idle, when God bids us *Seek first the Kingdome of God and its Righteousness*, it would be all one as if he should say, be sure you seek that in the first place which when ye have sought never so long

ye

ye are sure never to find, for there is no such state of Happiness to be attained. When we are bid to *Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his Face for ever more*, Psal. 105. 4. Which is all one as if we were bid to seek his Kingdome, for what is it else for him to Lord it over us so as to Rule us, to put forth his strength upon us so as to subdue our lusts mightily, to manifest his Face and presence in us so as to Enlighten, Enliven, Counsel, Comfort us: when he bids us thus do, he would bid us take pains to no purpose, for such an attainment is never to be Expected.

3*ly*. The secret Encouragments which Gods People have given in to them would be all Groundless and Delusory. There are none of Gods People but he dos inwardly speak unto their heart *Seek ye my Face*, labour to come unto a vision of God, unto an intimate Communion with him, so as to *see him as he is*, 1. *John*. 3. 2. To speak with him Face to Face; And by this inward invitation and Encouragement, their hearts are drawn out and Engaged thus to seek Gods Face, thus they resolve, their heart saith *thy Face Lord will we seek*, *Psal*. 27. 8. Now shall this their faith be in vain? *Shall God say unto the seed of Jacob seek ye me in vain?* *Isai*. 45. 19.

4*ly*. The industrious Endeavours of Gods people would be all lost. Do not they take a great deal of pains with themselves, Exercise a great

great deal of patience, and all this that they may attain the *Glory and Honour and immortality of this Kingdome Rom.* 2. 7. And must they lose all there Labour, is there no remedy but they must still be slaves to their own lusts, carried which way the Temptations of the Devil and the World drives them, is there no hopes of attaining the purity and liberty of this Blessed and Glorious *Kingdome*; Must all their Fervent prayers, their stedfast Resolutions, their unwearied Labours, their frequent selfdenyalls, in studying their states, purifying their hearts and reforming their Lives, all come to nothing? When they have made it their great Business for a long time to get into the Kingdome of Heaven, must they still be kept under the power of Satan; And shall he be of more might to Enslave them then God to save them? And what are those who are Stiled the only Sons of Wisdome, in very deed such Fools as to lay out their time and strength in pursuance of a designe which is altogether unfeasible,

5*ly*. The greivous sufferings of Gods People would be all in vain; What makes them so willingly and chearfully to expose themselves to the hatred and contempt of the World and Satan, to meet and Embrace hard censures, bitter Reproaches, Terible Threats, cruell usages, why do they *Chuse rather to suffer Affliction with Gods People then to Enjoy all the pleasures of Sin*, Why do they not rather shun sufferings then run into them

them, but that they know and Beleive and consider that if they *Suffer with Christ they shall Reign with him*, 2. *Tim.* 2. 12. And that as he by *Enduring the Cross, and dispising the shame, sate down at the Right Hand of God*, *Heb.* 12. 2. So shall they if they *Be faithfull unto Death, be sure to have the Crown of Life* &c. *Rev.* 2. 10. If they *overcome* as Christ did, *Christ will give unto them the power he Received from his Father to Rule the Nations with a Rod of Iron* &c. *Rev.* 2. 26. 27. And to the trouble they meet with in these sufferings, they oppose the Joy of the Kingdome, to the shame they meet with, they oppose the Glory of the Kingdome, *Rom.* 8. 18. *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time* &c. 2. *Cor.* 4. 17. *For our light Afflictions* &c. To the losses they undergo here, they oppose the Riches of the Kingdome *Heb.* 10. 34. *They took Joyfully the spoiling of their goods knowing in them selves that they had in Heaven a better and an indureing Substance.*

But may this Kingdome of Heaven be Entr'd into in this life.

Yes, why not, is it not possible that Victory may be gotton over lusts, that they shall little Molest us: and though we be in the midst of Temptations yet they shall not greatly either grieve or hurt us; may not we be *Beautified* and *Satisfied* with grace, so that we shall desire little of the pleasures and Riches and Honours of the World? May not we have *peace of Conscience* having no guilt lying upon them, *Peace of*

heart

heart being not disquieted with any Inordinate desire, or terified with any vain fear, *the peace of God* guarding them within; *Phi.* 4. 7. We being kept in *perfect peace by God Isa.* 26. 3.

Others have Enter'd into this Kingdome during this life, why may not we? pray who were they who were come *to Mount Sion Heb.* 12. 22. 23. 24. Were they not some among the *Hebrews* who were yet alive when the Author writ to them?

How could St. *Paul* bear up so Magnanimously as he did, so as to dispise all the Smiles and Frowns of the World, how could he have so much love to others, to have so great desire to see them do well as to Travel so many Miles, to expose himself to so many Hard-ships and Sufferings for their sakes, how could he be so wholy unconcerned about his Body and all its Comforts in this life, unless he had an inward feeling of that *Kingdome of God, which is not in word but in Power* 1. *Cor.* 4. 20. Vnless he felt the great Comforts of this *Kingdome*?

But what is the entrance into this Kingdome?

It is *Regeneration*; for as soon as ever we come to be *Born again*, to have a new life put in us which naturally carries us Heaven ward, and makes us disgust vanity, and to be ashamed of folly, and to loth all *Impurity*, *Iniquity* and *Hypocrisy*, then do's Christ dwell and Rule in us in some measure, he is in some sense *King* over us, and we are made *Kings with him*. But as it is

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in the World oft times after a King is Crown'd and own'd, he is hindred in the exercise of his regal Authority by the prevailing power of some Rebels, so that he is as it were King and no King, he has a Just Title to be King, but he cannot Exercise his Kingly Iurisdiction untill he have subdued the Rebels, so it is after *Regeneration*, lust gets up, and Christ withdraws as driven away, and till Christ return with power to subdue these lusts, there is little of the *Kingdome of God* appears, little *Righteousness*, little *Peace*, nothing almost but Corruption and confusion. So that this state of *Restitution* wherin we *Receive a Kingdome which cannot be Moved*, *Heb.* 12. 28. Is that which do's principally go under the name of *God's Kingdom*, and when we arrive at this; then we Enter into the *Kingdome of Heaven*.

Thus the Jewes enter'd into *Canaan* when they came out of *Egypt*, but because they were cast out of it again, that was not the great Enterance, but that when they Enter'd again after they had been cast out into *Babylon* and scatter'd into severall parts of the World, for after their return from *Babylon* they continued in the Land so long as the Jewish state was to continue *Jer.* 16. 14. 15.

Vse. 1*st*. Are we got into this Kingdome? It may be got into, others have got into it during this life. Its worth our while to Enquire, where are we? In it, or out of it, How canst thou say thou art in it, how got thou into it, knowest thou

thou how? What didſt thou do, what didſt thou ſuffer to get in? Can people dream themſelves into Kingdomes while they are ſleeping, will Kingdomes drop into their Mouthes while they are Gaping, can luſt be Mortifyed, and the Soul quickened, and peace Eſtabliſhed in the heart, and Holineſs in the life, and the man can give no account how all this came about?

What ſignes is there of thy being in this *Kingdome*, Art thou freed from the Commanding power of luſts ſo as not to obey them? Do's Chriſt no ſooner ſpeak in thee, but he is heard and Obſerved and Obeyed, is there ſo much order and Righteouſneſs and peace in thy heart and Life, as may make it appear thou art under the Governance of ſo *Wiſe* and *Righteous* and potent a Prince, as the great God of Heaven is?

2*ly*. Are we in the way to it? Are we in the way to that lower Kingdome which is Immediately Enter'd upon in Regeneration? where Chriſt keeps the Throne in the heart, and the will is for God, though luſt domineer in the Members.

1. Do we Conſcienciouſly ſet our ſelves to do what ever is manifeſted to be our duty, and to leave undone what ever we are Convinced to be Contrary hereunto?

2. Are we carefull to make vſe of thoſe means, whereby we may be convinced of the Worlds *Vanity*, Sins *Folly*, the Souls poverty &c.

And

And whereby we may be kept under those Convictions, untill we be brought unto saving Conversion, and to new Creatures?

Are we in the way to that higher *Kingdome*, which is not enter'd into untill Restitution after desertion? What greif is it unto our Souls that we should be so much under the power of our lusts? Do we hereupon cry out *O wretched man that I am* &c. *Rom.* 7. 23. 24. What fears do we ly under that God should never deliver us out of this Miserable Condition? What complaints do we make that we are so far left to our selves *Isa.* 40. 27. *My way is hid from the Lord, and my Judgment is passed over from my God Isa.* 49. 14. *The Lord hath forsaken me and my Lord hath forgotten me*, what Earnest importunitys are there stirring in us that the Lord would help us here? *Psal.* 77 7. 8. 9. *Will the Lord Cast off Ever* &c. What Resolutions do we take up to *wait patiently on the Lord till he have Mercy on us? Psal.* 27. 14. *Wait on the Lord be of good Courage* &c. *Psal.* 130. 5. 6. *I wait for the Lord my Soul doth wait* &c.

How do we Reason our selves unto this? *Lam.* 3. 26. 27. *Its good that a man should both hope and quietly wait* &c. Can we content ourselves to heare that there is a Kingdome, an Heavenly Kingdome to be Enter'd into, and we in the mean while know not that we are either in it, or in the way to it?

3ly. What hopes have we of it? Indeed there are

are very few that are out of the Kingdome, and out of the way to it, but they have great and fair hopes of it. It is the Devils policy to muzzle People in hopes of Heaven, when in the way they are in, they are never like to arrive there.

But what grounds have they for their hopes. Is God mercifull? Its true He is so; Infinitely Mercifull, but for all this mercy there are many Thousands Roaring in Hell, and so maist thou come to be too. Are Christs merits vast? Indeed they are so, but for all that, there are Millions that are like to be never a whit the better for them.

Those that are not in the way to Heaven are certainly in the way to Hell, and sure if they hold on in this course, as for any thing appears they are like to do, they have no reason to Expect that this should ever bring them to Heaven; Nay, the higher and stronger their hop's are of getting to Heaven: the less ground there is for their hopes, for they are so much the likelier to hold on in the way they are in: and if it be not the way to Heaven, it will assuredly never bring them thither.

Now can you be pleased that there should be a Kingdome to be Enter'd into, and you neither in it, nor like to Enter it, nay to be at a greater distance from it while you hope for it, nay at a farther distance from it for your hopes.

4*ly*. Why do we not bestir our selves to get

into it? 1st. Is it not worth desiring; If a Kingdome, such a Kingdome so Righteous, so Glorious, so Durable be not desirable what is? Who would not willingly be in such a state, wherein they shall want nothing which they desire, and wherein they need fear nothing which they do abhor, wherein God himself will be their full Satisfaction, and a sufficient security; wherein they may as soon expect that Gods will should not be done, as that theirs should not, their will being resolved into God's will.

How can their be any Dissatisfaction there, where all Inordinate desires are mortified, and where God is present to Satisfy all Regular ones?

2. Is there no danger of missing this Kingdome? What not when there are so many Thousands that are very unlikely to come to it, so many Thousands that are utterly in an incapacity of ever attaining it? What not when we are at such a great distance from it, and there are so many difficulties in our way to it, and we are so averse ourselves, and we have so many hinderances from without, and we read of those who have come near this Kingdome, and yet for any thing we know come short of it too.

3. Is there nothing to be done by us for the attaining it? Must God do all, and we sit still, to what purpose are all Gods Counsels and commands, and prohibitions, and Threatenings and promises, if we can do nothing to further our

our ſelves in the way to Heaven, nothing to hinder us.

Now if it be worth getting, and may be miſſed, but never can be got without our beſtirring our ſelves, unleſs *it ſuffer Violence* by us; why do not we Enquire the way which leads to it, why do we not labour to get into it? Why do not we count all our time and Labour loſt, which is not Employed in order to it?

1. Care we not if we never come there, is Heaven ſo deſpicable then? Are Souls ſo vile? Will Hell be ſo eaſy? How know we but our dallying, and triffling and puting off from time, to time, may ſhut us out of Heaven, and plung us into Hell before ever we are aware? Can God ſuffer without high Indignation his gracious offers of no leſs then a *Kingdome* unto Sinners and Wormes to be ſo baſely ſlighted? Do not they deſerve to have Heaven door ſhut on them, who will not Enter when it ſtands wide open, and they ſo fairly invited in?

2. Are we affraid to come to Heaven over ſoon, will it be any inconvenience unto us to be raiſed above the vain Comforts of the Creature, and to be brought to full Satisfaction in God himſelf? Will it be any loſs to us to Exchange our luſts for Chriſt, and Earthly Comforts for Heavenly ones? If Heaven will not make us happy, why would we be there at all; and if it will make us happy, why would we not be there ſoon, can we be happy over ſoon?

Doct. 2. Men may be fair professours and yet not do the will of God.

This is evident out of Christ words, for if every one who said *Lord, Lord,* did *God's will* they would certainly enter into Heaven: which yet Christ denyes they do. They may openly pretend that they are Christs Servants, and that he is their Lord; they may pretend that in many things they are willing ye desirous to yeild him that obedience and Observance, which is due from a Servant to a Lord; they may have those Expectations from him of Countenance, Protection, Maintenance, which a servant has from his Lord; they may make those Ceremoniall addresses to him which a servant does to his Lord, in prayers and Religious duties, and yet live in Disobedience to him. This God observed in the *Jewes Isa.* 29. 13. *This People draw near me with their Mouths* &c. *Isa.* 58. 2. *Yet they seek me Early* &c. They may abound in these Religious Complements so much that God shall be quite tired with them, and yet lead very bad lives, be as bad as the worst *Isa.* 1. 11. *To what purpose is the Multitude of your Sacrifices* &c.

The reason of this is taken from themselves.

Profession is easy, but *Sincere impartiall obedience* is difficult, it cannot be done without denying themselves in there Inclinations and interests, profession neither puts to Toyle nor shame, nor Cost to speak of, neither do's it inwardly disquiet them, and therefore they can easily bear

an empty profession, a form without power, they may be professours without any great Trouble.

But why must they be professours, why may they not let the form of Religion alone as well as the power.

Because Profession is convenient if not necessary.

1 To quiet Conscience, which will not be content without something like Religion, as men give Children Counters instead of Gold to keep them from Crying.

2 To serve Temporal interest, for though the power of Religion be Troublesome, as disturbing people in their sinfull pleasures; yet a form of Religion is very acceptable, and to be a professour after such a mode as is most in request brings much repute. So that this is a means oftimes to procure unto persons Esteem and love with some Persons and parties, which may conduce much toe the bringing them Custome, if they be Tradesmen, advantaging them in their marriages if they be single persons &c.

3ly. Profession may be sufficient to reach all those ends of Religion which men generally think it of use for, for men do not look on Religon as designed for the Cleansing of their hearts, and Reforming of their lives, but they only conceit it is intended to please a great God, pacify an angry God: and they fancy God to be such an one as those proud Fools are, who are soon pleased with caps and Cringes and a parcel of good words.

Vſe. Let us take heed that we be not ſuch like *Sounding braſs or Tinkling Cymbals* 1. *Cor.* 13. 1. All ſhew and Noiſe, but nothing within. know this, that we cannot affront God more highly then to go about to Cheat him, while we pretend to ſerve him; like many Courtiers who carry with much Ceremoniall Formality when they have ſenſeleſs deſigns to Miſcheive. As if God were ſo Fooliſh as not to underſtand, that to preſent him with empty obſervances is as great a mockery as to offer another the ſhell while we keep the Kernell of the Nut to our ſelves: or ſo Blind that he could not ſee that there wants our heart, when there is nothing but fair words in our Mouth. ſee how God abhors ſuch Carriages as theſe *Iſa.* 66. 3. *He that Kills an Oxe as if he ſlew a man* &c. See how highly he is provoked againſt theſe, who allow themſelves to lead Evil lives and yet keep a deal of do about *the Temple of the Lord* &c. *Jer.* 7. 3. 4. 11.

Doct. 3. Thoſe who profeſs fair, though they live in diſobedience to God, they may fancy to themſelves a likelyhood of their entering into the Kingdome of Heaven?

This is too much confirmed by daily Experience, for we find how Difficult a thing it is to perſwade People that they are in danger of miſſing Heaven, even when there is nothing but Diſobedience in their lives *Jer.* 4. 14.

The reaſon is becauſe,

1ſt.

1ſt. People are not willing to lay aſide thoſe hopes which they cannot part with, but be pludged into deſparate Fears and Troubles, for if they be not ſuch as ſhall enter into Heaven, what will become of them ſhould they be taken away by death before any Alteration be made in them.

2ly. People think they have grounds for theſe hopes, conſidering the miſerable Condition of the generallity, in caſe their hopes ſhould prove vain and groundleſs: for theſe have no more to rely on then themſelves have.

3ly. People are ſo Blind naturally, have blinded themſelves by ſinfull Cuſtomes, are ſo blinded by Satan their Malicious Enemy, are given up to that Blindneſs by God *the Righteous Judge*, that they cannot ſee the Unreaſonablneſs of their hopes, they ſee not the deſperate Wickedneſs of their own hearts, they do not ſee the great purity, and exact Righteouſneſs of God, their Saviour and Judge, who alone can fit them for Heaven, and admit them into it, they underſtand not the right Nature of Heaven, which renders it utterly impoſſible that a Wicked Perſon ſhould Enter into it, for is it Imaginable that Chaſtity ſhould be any pleaſure to a wanton, ſobriety to a Drunkard, humility to a proud man, Charity to a Malicious man, meekneſs to an angry man &c. No more can Heaven be any happineſs to any Wicked man.

Vſe. Let us be Suſpicious of our ſelves, that we

we as well as others may please ourselves in those Delusions, and let us take heed of them as dangerous, for we shall never take the right Course to get Heaven, so long as we fancy that we have found out a far Easier way.

Doct. 4. Only doing God's will, will bring to Heaven; doing that will which is agreeable to the present state we are in. Are we unregenerate, it is *God's will* that we should live up to our light and strength, that which we have Received in a way of Common grace, in doing duty and avoiding Sin, and Declining Temptations. *It is God's will that we* should use all means for the increasing of our light and *Strength, that* we may better understand what we have to do, and be more enabled to it. Are we Regenerate, it *is God's will* that According to the Measure of grace we have Received, we should *Sanctify God in our Conversation.* Its God's will, that we should do the utmost which in us lies for the *Perfecting holiness in the fear of God*, and for the getting cleansed *From all filthiness both of flesh and Spirit.*

How then is this doing God's will Necessary? if we look on Heaven as Gods gift its Necessary we should *do God's will*, because these are the Termes which God has set for his bestowing Heaven, *he will render to all according to their works*, these he Judges by at the last day, *Mat.* 25. no Right to Heaven without these *Rev.* 22. 14.

If we look on Heaven as that which cannot in the very Nature of the thing be Entered into but

but by those who are fitted for it.

These conduce as they help to Mortify lusts by Restraining them, to perfect graces by Exercising them, to call mightily in for Gods help, by finding the need we stand in of this.

Use. 1 Let us not entertain any Doctrine which Crosses this, if any give you such an account of the Undertakings and ends of Christ, which is not Reconcilable with this, believe them not, Christ did understand the designe of his owne Undertaking aswell as any: and this is his Doctrine.

2*ly.* In what a dangerous Condition very many are, if they continue in the state, and hold on in the Course they are in, they must of Necessity be vtterly and irrecoverably ruined. Yet there is no possibility of bringing them out of this Condition, so long as they please themselves in Expectations that they shall do very well in it. And these Expectations are so firmly settled in mens minds that it is Extreamly difficult to shake them, much-less to overturne them; what grounded hopes can any understanding persons have of those, who have such groundless hopes of themselves,

Thus it is with the generallity, they will not be beat out of it, but that they are beyond all danger when indeed their case is very near desperate.

3*ly.* What great need then is there of a Searching and awakening Ministry, when people are so very apt to deceive themselves, they had not need have their Teachers delude them too. Alas! what

what will it advantage any to have the Minister speak peace to their Conscience, when God speaks none, to have him assure them of Heaven, when God is resolved to seclude them thence. Yet these are they who are the most in account, as if People took delight in being deluded and Destroyed both together.

Now how much better would it be for People that they were made apprehensive of their danger, and so awakened to take an Effectuall course for the Securing themselves indeed.

Its sad for men never to get awakened out of their Dreams of Heaven 'till the flames of Hell have seized on them. These vain Expectations will not hold alwayes, there will a time come when we shall find by Experience how Idle they are; and when ever we see that these are like to deceive us, we must expect Trouble, but better a little Trouble now when it will be to some purpose, then a great deall when it is too late. It will little advantage us to discerne the groundlesness of our Expectations then when they have utterly ruined us beyond all remedy.

Mat. 7. 25.

Mat. 7. 25.

And the Rain Deſcended and the Flouds came, and the Winds blew and beat upon that Houſe; And it fell not, for it was Founded on a Rock.

WE have ſeen the way of a wiſe Mans Building, now follows the proof of it, where we have.

1ſt. A great Tryall, no ſooner is this houſe Erected, but it is Variouſly tryed whether it be able to ſtand or no; here is Rain from above, which by the ſubtilty of its parts being an humid body will Search the houſe and thereby looſen the Companes of it, and by the Vehemency of its force being an heavy body will preſs the houſe, and Endanger the beating of it down, Eſpecially if the Rain fall in any great quantity, as they ſay it frequently does near the Sea ſide where this houſe is ſuppoſed to ſtand, for its there where Ordinarily we meet with Rocks and Sands

Sands. if it fall with any Conſiderable violence, then an impetus is added to its weight, to make it beat more furiouſly. Here are Flouds towards the Foundation: whither by theſe we underſtand Flouds of the Sea, which when the Tide is up, eſpecially if it be a ſpring Tide, riſe high, Roar Horribly, and beat very Impetuouſly and may reach the Foundation of the houſe which is raiſed on the Sea-ſide; alſo when a Tempeſt is out by reaſon of which the Sea is put into a vehement Comotion, ſo that it cannot keep its Ordinary bounds, but overflows all about it, at which time it ſtrikes with a mighty force, both through the Maſſineſs of its bulk, and alſo through the Impetuouſneſs of its motion; or we underſtand Flouds of the Land, when Rivers by reaſon of high Winds and great ſhowers of Rain, or Snow overflow their banks and beat down all before them; or when by Exceſſive Rains Turrents are made in thoſe low places where there uſe to be little or no water.

Whither theſe Flouds come from the Sea, or Rivers, or the Clouds, they uſually move with that Violence, that it muſt be a very ſtrong Building that will be able to ſtand before them. Here are winds on all ſides upon the walls of the houſe; Now Experience ſhewes how great the force of theſe is, for the blowing down trees that are deeply and firmly rooted, the blowing down Buildings which ſeem to have great ſtrength and ſtability. Here is a concourſe of all

theſe

these weighty Tryalls at one and the same time; they all as it were meeting together to make proof of their vnited forces upon this new erected house; or however at least there is an Immediate succession of each of these to other, the Rain insinuating betwixt the Stones of the Building loosens them so that they may be easily seperated one from another, this is followed by the Flouds, one Floud upon the neck of another which do what may be done for the weakening of the Foundation; then comes the winds fiercely Blustering upon the walls to bring all down together. It is not Floud and wind in the Singular Number, but Flouds and Winds in the Plurall, to shew that this house is not Assaulted only by one Floud, or one wind, but many.

4ly. A good event, those who are concerned any thing about the standing of this house, when they see it assaulted on every side by so many furious adversaries, which either set upon it altogether, or take their turnes for the demolishing it, methinkes should verily expect to see this made a Miserable heap of Rubbish, or at least greatly fear that it will scarce Escape this dismall state; how should it, when, alass, what assaults it is too visible, what should support and uphold it appears not at all. Yet beyond all hopes of friends, and Contrary to all Expectations of Enemies, after that the Rain, the Flouds, the winds had blustered and beat where

utmost

utmoſt to ruine it, we find it ſtill ſtanding where it was before, unaltered, unremoved.

3ly. A ſolid ground for this; If any ask what reaſon can be given why this houſe ſhould ſtand though all that poſſibly could be done to ruine it has been done, when other houſes that ſeemed full as firmly built, have fallen flat to the ground upon far leſs ſhaking. He may be eaſily anſwered, that whatever Foundation theſe Ruinous houſes had, this had a ſteady and ſtable one, a Rock, which neither length of time could conſume, nor Violence of the weather remove, and upon this account, this Continued ſtedfaſt while the other Totter'd and Tumbled.

Doct. Whoever erects a Spirtuall building muſt expect to have the ſtrength of it tryed by many and Various Temptations.

What Chriſt in the parable does declare to befall the Materiall Building when it was once raiſed: that we in the Morall ſhould expect to befall our Spirituall Buildings, we are no ſooner built upon the Foundation, being really united unto Chriſt, but forthwith we find ſtormes and Temptations on every ſide.

Indeed while the Foundation is in laying, there is uſually great Tranquillity and ſerenity in the Soul. The Lord by his providence orders it ſo, that Temptations are held off on every ſide, there is no Diſturbance to the Soul either from luſts within, or from the world or Satan without, but there are Vigorous movings of the

Soul

Soul after God, and gracious incom's of God into the Soul, in life and light, in peace and Joy, there is much ſtirring of grace, to put the Soul upon Action for God, much ſtirring of comfort to let the Soul find Satisfaction in God, much ſtirring of Light, to give the Soul to receive Direction from God upon all Occaſions it is put to, and God herein does wiſely conſult the Souls reall and Eternall good. For,

1ſt. Hereby he confirms the union betwixt the Soul and Chriſt, which would never be ſo cloſe and intimate, and Conſequently ſo firme, if it met with any diſturbance at the firſt. If you Glew two bodies together, you muſt not move them untill the Glew be hardened, elſe they will not hold long together, if you would renew the union which has been diſſolved in any part of a Mans body either by wound or breach, you muſt not only compoſe them together in due order, but let them lye at reſt Cloſe together for ſome time, if you ſtir them before they be well cemented they fall aſunder forthwith, and all your labour is loſt. God very well knows that ſhould he ſuffer a Soul which is juſt now united to Chriſt to meet with any Diſturbance and hardſhip, there is great danger it ſhould be wrought off againe ſoon. A Member newly ſet in joynt, if it be put to any ſtreſs is ſoon diſjoynted again.

2ly. Hereby he does effectually weane the Soul from the Choyceſt comfort here below, while

while he gives it ſenſibly to Experience more Satisfactory Comforts in Chriſt, the Sweetneſs whereof it would never fully apprehend, if it did not really taſt them: And it could never taſt them to purpoſe if it was diſturbed in the Enjoyment, when it is carried with greateſt ardency out after them.

3*ly*. Hereby he does fixedly engage the Soul for himſelf, by giving it to Experience what unconceivable ſatisfaction may be found in him, as it has, during that quiet repoſe which it finds in God, being freed from all Diſturbance within or without. And when this is in a great Meaſure withdrawn, ſo that it feels very little of it. The Soul ſtill retains a freſh memory of it, and is hereby put upon ſeeking Earneſtly and Unceſſantly untill it again find that unſpeakable delight in God, which it found once, though now it have loſt this, indeed this delight in God is ſo Exceeding great, that did not the Soul Remember it once Experienced this, it could never believe there was any ſuch to be Experienced, and ſo might eaſily be induced to take up with ſome Creature comforts, as being altogether unaquainted with any better: upon ſuch Conſiderations as theſe the wiſe and the good God do's upon the Souls firſt cloſing with Chriſt keep off all inward and outward diſturbances whatſoever, whereby the Soul may be the leaſt diverted from attending to theſe Enjoyments which are then given in, deter'd from ſatiating it ſelf

with

with them; untill the Soul be firmly united to the Foundation all ſtorms are allayed.

But after the Foundation has been once laid well, and the Soul is unmoveably fixed on the Foundation; then follow a multiplicity and variety of Temptations, *James* was well aware of this method of God's when he warned thoſe he wrote to, what they were to Expect; and withall Exhorted them to receive theſe Numerous and Various Temptations rather with joy then greif, Conſidering the advantage which was like to accrue unto them by theſe, *Jam.* 1. 2. 3. 4. *My brethren count it all Joy &c.* So was *Peter* too, when he forewarnes thoſe he wrote to, of a Tryall which they were to paſs through, which for its ſearching and Tormenting did well deſerve to be called *Fiery*: And though they, while they felt the greivouſneſs of it might conceit that none was ſo perplexed with Trouble as themſelves; Yet herein they would be in an errour, which being like to prove prejudiciall they had need to be cautioned againſt, 1. *Peter.* 4. 12. *Beloved think it not ſtrange Concerning the fiery Tryall* &c. It was no otherwiſe with them then it had been and would be with all their *Brethren in the World*, 1. *Peter.* 5. 9. *Knowing that the ſame Afflictions are Accompliſhed in your Bretbren &c.* When theſe Temptations do uſually beſet Perſons, the Author to the *Hebrews* do's acquaint us, it is ſoon after they are *Illuminated*, and the Foundation is laid in the Soul at

Converſion; for as it is in the firſt Creation ſo it is in the New Creation, light is the firſt thing which do's appear, *Heb.* 10. 32. *In which after ye were enlighted*, &c.

But why are theſe Temptations, which the Soul ſoon after Converſion is ſet on by, reſembled to *Showers*, *Flouds*, *Winds*?

Becauſe they bear a certain analogy to theſe, and are that to the Spirituall houſe, which theſe are to the Materiall: Threatning as much to demoliſh this, as theſe do the other; for both ſet on the houſes, they beat on to bring down with,

1*ſt*. A great potency of force. This is evident in Flouds which are the Commotions of the waters, as the wind is of the Aire, which being great bodies muſt needs have a ſtrength in them proportionable to their bulk: There are ſome Modern Philoſophers of late which Demonſtrate unto our very ſenſes, that the Aire though it ſeem a light body unto us, yet take a great quantity of it together in a full body, it has a very Conſiderable weight, and with its preſſure will make very heavy bodies to aſcend. And ſhowers though when they fall drop by drop, they ſeem to have ſmall force, yet when they come with full guſt, as is not unuſual in ſome Climates, they have power to ſink the ableſt Ships.

2*ly*. A great Vehemency of Impetus. Lay an heavy ſtone upon a man it will preſs him ſore, yet if it be not very great it will do him no further

further harm; but let the same Stone fall on him from any Considerable height, and it will crush him to pieces, and the higher it falls still with more Vehemency it beats, and its force is more Effectuall, thus it is with Flouds, and winds, and showers, which are great bodies put in Motion; which besides their own proper and internall force, have an accidentall and externall Added from that impulse which they have received: Like an arrow which if it lie on one, will scarce be felt: if it fall on one from some height will smite with a smart blow, and will do more then so, when it is shot out of a Strong Bow; for it will peirce a man quite through.

3*ly*. A great Assiduity of presture. Usually none of them come by fits, have no intermissions, but Continually urge the fall of the house till they have done.

4*ly*. A great Constancy of perseverence. These usually keep on their bluttering unto the very end, untill they be quite spent, and then they give over and rest.

Thus do Temptations with the Spirituall building, they come with force, they beat with Violence, they give little Intermissions, they give not over till they have tryed their utmost strength, as all Agents which are meer Naturall and not Rationall also do. I might add,

5*ly*. A great frequency of return. Though one shower, one Floud, one Wind be over, we are never secure but another may come.

But whence do the Temptations of Souls Arise?

God has the generall Superintendency over all, he orders them both as to their kinds, and Measures, and Seasons, and Durations; none shall come but what he sends, or shall Afflict more then he pleases, or surprize at such seasons when God never intended it, nor Continue longer then agrees with God's will, and suits his designes let whoever be the imediate instrument of them, men, or Devils, God is the Originall and Supreme Author.

But then as to the particular causes of them, these are various, sometimes God himself Tempts, for though God in some sense *Tempteth no man James*, 1. 13. That is, none with a designe to draw to sin, as Satan and mens lusts Tempt them, yet he Tempts many to try them, to Discover their graces to the World, and their Corruptions to themselves, to purge them, to Exercise their graces *&c.* And the way of God's Tempting is partly by suspending his influences of light to direct, of life to quicken, of strength to enable; partly by ordering his providences so, that the many lusts which are latent may have Occasion to Act, and thereby discover themselves; sometimes Satan Tempts, as he Tempted Christ, *Mat.* 4. and *Eve*, 2. *Cor.* 11. 3. and *David*, 1. Cron. 21. 1. *To number the People*. The false Prophet to delude *Ahab* with a lie 1. *Kings* 22. 22. *And he said I will go forth*

and

and I will be a lying Spirit in the Mouth of all his Prophets &c. Job. To curse God Job. 1. 11. *Chr.* 2. 5. 7. and *Peter* to deny his Master, *Luke* 22. 31. *Judas* to betray his Master *John* 13. 2. and *Ananias to lie to the holy Ghost*, Acts 5. 3.

Satan has severall wayes to Tempt.

1. By Inward suggestions. Though he cannot immediately insinuate into the mind and heart, the understanding and will, (this being the sole prerogative of God himself) as to have Cognisance of the heart, so to have influence upon it directly, yet as he has severall wayes of guessing at what is stirring within a man, so he has Collaterall ways of influencing upon a man, for he can work much upon the fancy, and by the help of this, he can suggest both allurements to sin, and Encouragements in it, and Directions how to manage it most perniciously. He can excite odd thoughts in the mind, by Reflections which he makes from the fancy; and he can Variously turn Affections, by putting different Motions upon the Blood and Spirits.

2*ly*. By outward Operation and apparitions. As those who retired into the Wilderness in the primitive times to avoid the Violence of persecution, frequently Experienced Commotions of the Aire, the winds and Tempests as in *Jobs* case, he is *the Prince of the Power of the Aire Ephe*, 2. 2. Excitations of mens minds to do Gods People a Mischeif, as he stirred up *Judas* against Christ. sometimes men Tempt, freinds as well as

Enemies, good as well as bad; by their Example by their Counsels, and by their practises.

But wherin do the Temptations of a Soul newly converted consist.

They consist Cheifly in two things.

1st. *Afflictions.*

2ly. *Allurements of the world.*

1st. *Afflictions*, whereby the way they are already enter'd into is made uneasy unto them, they meeting with that which greives them as they are *Christians*, and carry about with them a new nature, and life, greives them as they are *Men*, and still continue in a great Measure in the old nature; there is a sensible Deadening of the inward life, and weakening of the inward strength a Darkening of the inward light, a dashing of the inward comfort, the usuall Influences of that Spirit of life, and strength, of light and consolation; whence all these have their spring and source, being greatly if not Totally suspended.

Now the Soul which has been lately so much weaned from the world, cannot but be in a very Disconsolate condition, when it hangs as it were betwixt Heaven and Earth, lies betwixt God and the Creature, and can find Comfort in neither, like the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, which can neither get backward unto the *Garlick and Onyons* of *Egypt*, nor forwards unto the *Milk and Honey of Canaan*. So that here is want of inward Comfort unto the renewed Soul, that Comfort which it is used to in God, and which it has only

a Relish for, and then there is a sense of what do's greive, as stirrings of Corruptions, omissions of dutyes, Commissions of sins; it being left by God unto its own darkness and weakness, whereby Notwithstanding its utmost Resolution and Exactest Caution, it is overcome by Temptations; easily overcome by slight ones. Afterwards when the old nature gets more up, the Motions of the new Nature growing faint and low, and he who was Formerly Heavenly begins to be Earthly, and becomes somewhat taken with the Follies and Vanities which are in the World; he meets with abundance of Vexation in, and by them, Crosses of strong desires, Frustrations of the fairest hopes, various Occasions of greif, and sorrow by what befalls him in his Body, or Estate, or good name, or Relations.

3ly. *Allurements* unto seeking happiness in the Creature, when wee miss of finding it in God for the present, and allowing ourselves in such sinfull Courses as are most agreeable to our sex, Age, Constitution, and Condition; that hereby we may attain the Satisfaction which we find a want and need of and desire; this made *Solomon* to traverse the whole world over, and to turn from one Creature to another, for having lost that rest which he once found in God, he could not rest any where untill he said to his Soul *return unto thy rest.*

Now do these Temptations work as to the overthrowing the Spiritual Building?

The ſtrength of this Building lies in the firmneſs of the Foundation, and the Cloſeneſs of the Souls union unto this Foundation. Now the Foundation it ſelf is ſuch as cannot be moved by all the Artifice and power either of the World, or Hell, or both.

The main danger then of the Ruine of this Building lies in the looſneſs of its union to the Foundation; if this can be diſſolved the Building muſt needs fall. This union is made by an ardent love to Chriſt, and a Confident faith in Chriſt. If therefore a mans Affections to Chriſt can be any way alienated from him, if his Expectations from Chriſt can be utterly Diſcouraged, his Building on Chriſt is like to fall.

Here then is the Tryall which is made of the Building; if the Soul will ſtill perſiſt to love Chriſt, and that life, Righteouſneſs, Holineſs, and goodneſs, which is to be found in him, and got from him; ſo that it longs after theſe; Prizes theſe above all worldly Enjoyments whatſoever, ſeeks for theſe in the uſe of all means, cannot be content to be without theſe upon any Termes, is reſolved not to loſe theſe, whatever they Coſt, when it finds for the preſent little but Trouble on every ſide, by making this Choyce, it neither finds Comfort in God, nor in the Creature; God forſakes and Friends forſake, every one is ready to deſpiſe and Reproach and perſecute us; profane Perſons becauſe we are for ſome Religion; and formall Perſons becauſe we

are

are not for theirs. We cannot rest in any form be it what it will be, we find a need of an inward life and power for our Satisfaction, and this we must have, let it cost us our Estates, our liberties, our very lives.

If thus the Soul has an unquenchable love to Christ, such a love as is spoken of *Cant.* 8. 6. 7. *which is as strong as Death, and many waters cannot quench it* &c. When nothing will move it to disgust Christ, though it suffer never so much by him and for him, nothing will allure it from Christ, though you present it with all the Pleasures, Honours, Riches of the World.

Here is an unparaled love to Christ.

If the Soul will still persist to hope in Christ, when Christ seemes not only to Neglect but oppose it, when it gets nothing from him but frowns Rebukes and blowes, when all its Endeavours and Prayers seem in vain, and all Christs promisses and our Expectations fail, when lusts continue in their strength, after all that we have done to pull them down; and grace continues in its weakness, after all that we have done to raise it; its with the Soul as it is with the Church *Isa.* 26. 18. *We have been with child, we have been in pain,* &c. And *Psa.* 74. 9. *we see not our signes, there is no more any Prophet, neither is there among us any that knoweth how long,* and yet still the Soul will *hold the begining of its Confidence stedfast to the end,* Heb. 3. 14. *It will hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought*

unto

unto it, at the Revelation of Jesus Christ, 1. Peter. 1. 13. It will not listen to the Misgivings of its own heart, nor to the Discouragements it meets with from men, but will as David did in another case, 1. Sam. 30. 6. *Encourage it self in the Lord its God, and when it walkes in darkness and hath no light, will trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon its God*, Isa. 50. 10.

But why do's God, who could easily prevent these Temptations, permit them? seeing he is Enclined by his nature, engaged by his love, Obliged by his promise to do his utmost for their good, whatever his wisdome can Contrive, and his power Effect. Yea seeing he has Instructed them in particular to beg that of him, that he would not *lead them into Temptation*.

Nay why does he lay a Foundation for these Tryalls, and make way for them, by removing those inward Comforts of his Spirit, which while the Soul enjoyes it has little sense of all outward Afflictions whatsoever, be they never so grievous; it was the sense of these which made the fire to be as inoffensive, as delightfull, as a bed of Roses to the Tryumphing Martyr's, it has little relish for all other delights, little Ambition for any other glories, it can easily despise them, as it do's disgust them, having these to satisfie it self with: No Adversity can weary it, no prosperity can inveagle it, so that it shall be willing to quit Christ, to break its Union to him, its Communion with him.

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As to the latter, why God do's desert it after the Foundation is surely laid. It is,

1st. That by withdrawing his powerfull presence, corruptions might recover strength, and Act, and by Acting discover themselves to the Soul. For it is imposible a man should believe himself to be so Exceedingly polluted as he will find himself, when he veiws himself in the light of God, and is in a great measure deprived of Restraining grace.

You will say, may not the Remembrance of his Former Enormities, before he was savingly wrought upon by God, sufficiently convince him.

No, partly because he did not much observe these, as making no great Conscience of his ways, and not obliging himself greatly to keep a Constant watch over his heart, that he might take Notice where the mass of Corruption lies. Partly because then he had very small light to discern any but gross Corruptions? Whereas the most abominable and Mischeivous lusts are more refined and spirituall, and so scape the observance of his dull eye, partly because he has forgotten the more particular Aggravations of his sinfull courses? Partly because since his Conversion there are new Aggravations which Increase the sinfulness of his wayes, what he do's, being done against light, and strength, and Resolutions, and promises, wherewith he has obliged himself; and mercies wherewith God has Obliged him.

when

When God do's overflow a man with his grace, so that he easily keeps at under his Corruptions, and finds little disturbance by them in the way of duty, he is ready to conceit himself to be far more pure then God knowes him to be, and then he'le find himself to be; and its Impossible to beat him out of this proud conceit, but by giving him to find it confuted by reall Experience.

2*ly*. That he by Trying his own strength, may be feelingly convinced of the weakness of it, for at the First whatever God helps him to do, he is ready vainly to fancy that he can do that well enough of himself; and so whatever is well done by him, he imputes it to himself; Like the Child when his father or Master has guided his hand to write, will bragg of his fair Writing. One who is full of grace Assisting him, is ready to presume he *Can do all things*; but when he comes to know himself aright, and to understand that the grace which helped him was none of his own, but God's, and such as God does Arbitrarily Communicate, and may withdraw at his Pleasure, he modestly adds *through Christ that strengthens me Phil.* 4. 13. Otherwise he finds *he is not Sufficient of himself to think any thing as of himself*, 2, *Cor.* 3. 5. He cannot restrain his Corruptions, he cannot resist his Temptations, he cannot discharge his duty, he cannot bear his Cross, he cannot Improve his advantage. It is from hence that those Persons who have much

of

of God in them have far worse conceits of themselves, then the Vilest sinners have; not that they are really worse, but because they see more of their own badness, they have a light set up in them to see by, and by this Desertion they have an advantage whereby feelingly to Distinguish betwixt Christ in them, and self, betwixt the good which is in them by grace, and the Evill which is in them by nature; to men altogether Unexperienced of this Condition, What St. *Paul* Avouches is a very Paradox, *Rom.* 7. 18. *For I know that in me, (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing* &c. So then this do's very much conduce, nay is absolutely Necessary to work men into those self abasings which the Humility of the Gospell prompts to, they could never see what sinfull Creatures, what Foolish and weak Creatures they are otherwise.

God orders those outward Affliction which his People meet with from men and Devils.

1*st*. That they may find the Workings of those Corruptions, which the man would never have suspected himself enclined to, had he not been brought into an Afflicted Condition wherein there is Temptations to them.

As a man would not know that there is any thing of Impatience, or unbelief, in him, was he alwayes in prosperity, for who cannot trust God when he sees him, or who will not take every thing well at Gods hands, when God pleases him in every thing.

2*ly*.

2ly. That the Corruptions which are ſtirring in them, whereby they are Vehemently and Impetuouſly carried out after the Vanity of the World, may Receive an Effectuall check; when men have every thing according to their will, and meet with no Troubles, they are very apt to be proud, and to deſpiſe thoſe who are in an Afflicted Condition, they are apt to be worldly, and to pleaſe themſelves with the pomp of the World, and the Friendſhip of the World, they are apt to be ſenſuall and to wallow in bruttiſh pleaſures, they are apt to Neglect God, finding no great need of him, and to concern themſelves little about the intereſt of their Souls, not knowing the poverty and danger they are in. It is only Affliction, which when grace is low keeps Corruptions at under, and reſtrains the Soul from running out into thoſe Extravagancies which otherwiſe it is over prone to.

3ly. That the Soul may be kept in its motion Heavenwards. Becauſe grace is very low, the Soul is not carried ſo much after the things which are above as it once was, and it ſtill ſhould be, and therefore it had need to have a Spur to quicken it in its Motion, and the Temptations it meets with ſerve to this uſe. For when it can meet with nothing but Vexation every where on this ſide Chriſt, it is Neceſſitated for its own eaſe to ſeek for Reſt in Chriſt.

But why does the Devil Tempt thoſe whom he is not like to hurt by his Temptations, but rather to Advantage?

4ly.

1*ſt*. He knows not but he may remove them off the Foundation as he do's ſome who are not Cloſely united to it *Hebr*. 6.

2*ly*. If he cannot ruine them, he would however afflict them ſo long as it is in his power, for he knows that will not be long. And he knows he can afflict them moſt, when they have leaſt faith, and patience to deal with him.

3*ly*. If he cannot any way prejudice them, however he pleaſes himſelf, that he has done his utmoſt againſt them.

But why do men moleſt thoſe who live innocently by them?

1*ſt*. A Chriſtian being left by God unto himſelf, it may be he may not be every way ſo innocent, and blameleſs as becomes his profeſſion, but may by his indiſcretion and Corruptions give too great offence to thoſe that watch for occaſions againſt him, he may, though not in deeds, however in words and carriages offend.

2*ly* Severall men are Croſsgrain'd Naturally, ſome are thwarted in their Intereſts by theſe, ſome ſpite them, becauſe either by their doctrine, or Example, they reprove their Irregular Courſe; ſome think to ſhew their wit in ſcoffing them, or their power in breaking them. The Devil has ſeverall wayes to engage his Servants in his work, which is to decry and Suppreſs all impertiall followers after truth and Righteouſneſs.

Vſe. 1. Let none that ſeek after God be diſcouraged, if they meet with theſe Temptations, and

and find God hiding his face, Corruptions abounding, Afflictions pressing, the Devil rageing and the World persecuting with black mouths and Bloudy hands: These are but the wayes which God takes to try the strength of this Building, as the ship when its throughly equip'd is put out to Sea, to see how it will abide in a storme.

2ly. None should presume their case is any whit the better for their being altogether unexperienced in these Tryalls, they may flatter themselves as they please, but they can be none of Gods People of whom it may not be said at some time, *O thou Afflicted Tossed with Tempests and not Comforted* &c. *Isa.* 54. 11. This being the generall state of the Church.

3ly. Those that are Converted should expect and prepare for this, and in a Calme lay up for a storm.

Mat. 7. 25.

St. Mat. 7. 25.

And it fell not, for it was Founded on a Rock.

THis Verſe Contains in it three Parts.

1*ſt*. A Tryall of a new Erected building, which is ſet on grievouſly and variouſly, by Showers at the Top, Flouds at the Foundation, and Winds at the ſides and Walls.

2*ly*. A reſult of this Tryall, *It fell not.*

3*ly*. A reaſon of this reſult, *for it was Founded on a Rock.*

The Tryall I have already ſpoken to, the reſult of this is, that the houſe when all was done, fell not, though enough was done to make the faireſt and ſtrongeſt houſe (which wanted a good Foundation) fall; & though thoſe, who were deſirous to ſee the fall of it, were never ſo high in their hopes of obtaining this deſire, yet the houſe ſtood where it did at the firſt, as firm as ever.

Now what is the reaſon why this houſe ſhould ſtand, when many houſes that, ſo far as any man

could diſcern, were full as ſtrongly built, have come down to the ground, and been laid all on heaps by far leſs ſearching and preſſing Tryalls then theſe? The reaſon is, that the houſes, which fell, wanted the ſtrength and ſupport, which this ſtanding houſe has; they were not founded on a *Rock* as this is: What was above ground in the Superſtructure, was full as fair and promiſing to Mens eyes: but what was under ground in the Foundation, was deceitfull.

Doct. Whatever Temptations a ſpirituall Building, which is Founded on a Rock meets with, let them do their worſt againſt it, it will keep from falling.

Any houſe will ſtand while the Weather is Fair and Favourable, and nothing done againſt it to try its ſtrength; but only that houſe which has a good Foundation, and which is well built upon this Foundation, will abide all ſtormes.

There are Two things Obſervable in this Aſſertion of Chriſts.

1ſt. He ſuppoſes the worſt done that can be done, for the weak'ning and Overturning of this houſe: he grants, that it may be Aſſaulted on every ſide by many and Conſiderable Enemies, which uſe their utmoſt ſtrength and force againſt it. Nay, he ſhews that it will be thus Aſſaulted, Showers, and Flouds, and Winds, will come and Furiouſly beat on it, if not all together, yet one ſo in the Neck of another, that they ſhall do what may be done, for the Ruin of it.

2*ly*.

2*ly*. When he say's that the house fell not, after all this done to bring it down; He asserts it *Peremptorily*, he saith not, it did not fall soon, or it did not fall easily, but it did not fall at all. He asserts it *Vniversally*, he saith not, that some house, that was built by a wise man on a Rock, fell not: But what ever house it be, that is built wisely, so as to be *Founded on a Rock*, let it be assaulted by never such violent stormes, it stands in spite of them. He Asserts it *Experimentally*, as a thing which he has not only heard, but known.

In prosecuting this proposition I shall shew,

1*st*. *In what sense we own this for a truth.*

2*ly*. *How it may be proved to be one.*

3*ly*. *What grounds there are for it.*

4*ly*. *How weak the Exceptions are that are, made against it.*

When we say such a Building falls not,

1*st*. We do not say, that a Building, which seems founded on a Rock, falls not, but that which is really so Founded; for it must be granted, that Hypocrites may Cast a very fair shew, so as not only to deceive others, but themselves too, as doubtless those did, who to the very last presumed, that they were so interested in Christ, that they needed never fear to be disowned by him at the great day, *Mat*. 7. 22. *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not Prophesied in thy Name* &c.

Now the fall of such is no Exception to this

Truth, for it do's not follow, that becauſe Meteors in the Heavens, which ſeem to be Stars, but are only Jellies, which have got a great height and thereby much imbibe the Suns light, are ſeen Frequently to fall, that therefore the Stars of Heaven do fall too. Men may ſo Speciouſly profeſs Chriſt, as, though they be no living Branches in Chriſt, yet to gain the repute of being ſo. Now if theſe be taken away from the Root, it follows not, that the true living Branches can be taken away alſo. St. *John*, 15. 2. *Every Branch in me that beareth not Fruit, he taketh away* &c. If thoſe, who have only *a name to live*, but are Really Dead, as it was with the *Angel of the Church of Sardis Rev.* 3, 1. do afterwards carry ſo, as to make it apparent to all, that they are Dead indeed; this hinders not but thoſe who are indeed alive, may ſtill keep their life and cannot loſe it. If thoſe, who are ſo near the *Kingdome of God*, that they ſeem in it, eſpecially to thoſe, who are little Judicious in ſuch matters, (it was eaſy for Ordinary Perſons to miſtake him to be in the *Kingdome of God*, whom Chriſt Judges not to be far off *Mark.* 12. 34.) If theſe I ſay remove to a greater diſtance from God's Kingdome, than once they were at, to ſo great a diſtance that every one may now ſee, they are not in it, this ſhews not that thoſe who are once in the Kingdome of God may come out again.

2*ly.* We ſay not, that a Building, which is really *Founded on a Rock*, may not ſeem to fall. We

grant

grant, that one Really Vnited unto Christ may seem to fall off from him, he may seem thus both to himself, and to others. And this is not Unusuall unto those, who are in the state of Desertion; on whom little Fruit can be discerned by others outwardly, in whom little Fruit is found by themselves inwardly. All that they know by themselves is this; that they are not as they have been, as they should be, as they would be, and this is all, that is stirring in them near the Root, which Evidences them to be alive, like the Tree whose leaves are all gone. *Esai.* 6. 13. Thus the Tree in Winter seems dead, for it has no more on it, than a dead Tree has, neither Fruit, nor so much as Leaves. Yet it is not dead, for at the Spring it shew's, it has life in it, which it could not have, if ever it had lost it quite. Thus a man in a Swoon seems to be quite dead, he neither has sense, nor Motion, nor Pulse, nor Breath, nor Colour; He is every way as like a dead Corps as can be for a while, yet that he is not dead appears Sufficiently, in that he Recovers again.

3*ly*. Neither do I say, that those, who are indeed Founded on a Rock, may not really fall in part, and for a while, as an house may stand, and yet have something blown off it, or washed from it. As some Slate, or Tile off the Roof, some Plaister off the Walls &c. One really Vnited to Christ, and Quicken'd in him, and by him, may lose much of the Vigour of his life, much of the

ſtrength of his life, much of the Fruits of his life. The inward motions of his Soul after God, and the things of God, ſuch as Holineſs, Righteouſneſs, goodneſs, may be leſs Vehement, leſs Frequent, the outward Expreſſions of gracious motions within, whether in words, or Carriages, or Actions, may be leſs conſpicuous. And this may be either through Gods Arbitrary withdrawing from the Soul to try it, and humble it, and Empty it; Or through the Souls Voluntary withdrawing from God; for though he who is *Born of God*, ſo far as he is *Born of God*, cannot ſin, yet as he is Born of meer Man, and carries about him his Old nature, he may, eſpecially when he is expoſed to Violent Temptations. And by Sinning he may provoke God to ſuſpend his Influences, and may incapacitate himſelf to Receive the Influences, which God is willing and ready to give in.

That then which is to be Aſſerted is,

4*ly*. That one Built upon the Rock Chriſt, can neither fall *Totally*, nor *Finally*.

By a Totall fall I mean, ſuch a fall as would, be incurr'd by the Chriſtian, ſhould he be ſuppoſed to be removed off the Foundation, and to loſe his Union to Chriſt. The Conſequence whereof, muſt Neceſſarily be the loſs of all ſaving grace; ſo that though he ſtill retained ſome gifts and Common graces, which might render him *Tolerable* in the World, yea *Serviceable*, yet he was wholly without ſaving grace: which might make

make his heart good, bent for God and holineſs.

Now thus fall he cannot, though he may commit ſome ſins, yea and groſs ſins; and alſo Neglect ſome Conſiderable duties, and come under the Tyranny of ſome luſt, which he was Unacquainted with before, and little Exerciſe ſuch graces as formerly were ſtirring in him, yet ſtill he can never be ſo, but he'le have the Root of grace in him, and ſtill the bent of his heart will be Heavenwards, though as to any actuall motions of his Soul that way, he be either diverted from them by ſome *Deceit*, or hindr'd in them by ſome *Violence*. Thus the ſtone has an Inclination towards the center though it move, not that way, ſo long as ſome hand interpoſes to ſtop its motion. The Fountain has a ſtrong tendency to ſend out ſtreams of freſh water, though ſo long as the ſpring is ſtopt with ſtones, or mud, no water at all appears.

A Chriſtan then may fall partially but he cannot fall Totally.

By a Finall fall I Underſtand ſuch a fall as he will never recover out of, nor ſhake off the prejudice of.

Now a partiall fall may be ſuppoſed, where the reis no Totall. As there may be a finall death, where there is no Totall. As when a Man dies as to one part, be it a leg or an Arm, which is ſo ſeized on by the Palſey, as to loſe all ſenſe and Motion, which he never recovers again; in this caſe he dies finally, as to one part, though he die

not Totally as to his whole body.

Now this we ſay of one, who is Built on the Rock Chriſt, and is a Chriſtian. As he can neither fall *Totally*, ſo as to loſe his whole new life, Root and Branch; ſo neither can he fall *Finally*, ſo as never to recover that Meaſure of Life and Grace, which he is ſuppoſed to loſe. Indeed he may lie ſome while in his fall, without Riſing again by Repentance, as it was with St. *Peter*, who after he had denyed Chriſt once, went on to deny him again, and again more Grievouſly, and continued in this ſin without Repentance for about three houres, (as Divines by comparing together ſeverall Circumſtances of the Hiſtory, do compute) from Nine, till about Midnight, though he was Admoniſhed of his ſin, by the *Cock Crowing Twice*, for we find *Luke*. 22. 61. That *St. Peter* did not Remember what Chriſt had told him about his *Denying him Thrice, before the Cock Crew Twice, till Chriſt looked upon him*; and much more in *David*, who after he had defiled *Bathſheba*, and Murdered *Uriah*, Continued in his ſin about a Year not Repenting, for he Repented not till *Nathan* reproved him, and *Nathan* reproved him not, till a Child was born of his adultery with *Bathſheba*, 2. *Sam*. 12. 14. But God will order it ſo, that by ſome *Ordinance*, or ſome *Providence* he ſhall be Excited, and Enabled, to recover himſelf again, either dureing his Life time, or however at his Death; he ſhall recover himſelf ſo, as to be able and ready to forſake every ſin he has lived in, ſo diſcharge

discharge every duty he has Neglected, to overcome every lust he has been kept under by, to Exercise every grace he has been deficient in.

But how do's it appear, that those, who are Built on Christ, neither do, nor can fall, either Totally or Finally?

I shall not go about to Evidence either of these distinctly, but shall handle them conjointly.

1st. That life and grace, which Christians Receive upon their Union to Christ as their Foundation, head and Root, are resembled to such things as abide, if they do not grow and Flourish. *It is like a well of Water*, which usually is not dryed up, though the Summer be very droughty, *John* 4. 14. *A well of water, Springing up into Everlasting Life.* It is like a *Tree Planted by the waters*, which lives, and grows, and Flourishes, when others are quite dead for want of Rain. *Jere.* 17. 8 It is like *Seed*, which has *Taken Root in good Ground* and therefore abides, and Thrives, *and brings forth Fruit*, St. *Mat.* 13. 23. St. *Luke* 8. 15.

But you will say all these things have their end, few Fountaines but in time they quite fail: No Trees, how Commodiously soever planted, but in time die: No seed, but when it has brought forth as much fruit as it will, dies it self, and its Fruit will in time decay.

Yet let it be Considered that all these, last full as long as it could be Expected, they should do, according to their nature, and if they last not always, it is because their Nature is but to continue for a time.

Now

Now its the nature of ſaving grace to continue for ever, for *it is Everlaſting life* as it is called, St. *John.* 3. 36. *He that beleives on the Son hath Everlaſting life.* 1. John. 5. 11. *God hath given to us Eternal life.*

2*ly.* Thoſe who are thus united unto Chriſt are ſuch as *God has Choſen to Salvation*, and therfore they cannot fall away *Totally* & *Finally*; if they could, they would miſs of that Salvation which they are choſen to, and ſo Gods Election would be Fruſtrated.

Whoever are united to Chriſt are choſen of God, is evident, becauſe all thoſe are Effectually called, (Vnion to Chriſt being the Immediate reſult of Effectuall Vocation) and none are thus called by God, but ſuch as he has Choſen, *Rom.* 8. 30. Whoever are choſen of God are choſen to Salvation, is as Evident, for this is the End, which God deſignes to advance to, when he culls out ſuch from the World, as he Judges fit for his purpoſe 2. *Theſ.* 2. 13. *God has from the begining choſen you to Salvation* &c. That whoever fall away from grace muſt Aſſuredly miſs of Salvation, is evident to all, who underſtand and Conſider.

1*ſt.* What thoſe, who are ſaved, are mainly ſaved from, and this is their luſts and Sins, *Mat.* 1. 21. *He ſhall ſave his People from their ſins*, and this they cannot be, if they fall away from Grace.

2*ly.* What they are mainly ſaved to, or for, and

and that is Glory. Now thoſe, who have loſt grace, are incapable of glory, grace differing not at all from glory but in degres, grace is but glory in its Infancy, and glory is but grace in its full Growth.

Now that thoſe, who are Elected by God unto Salvation, cannot miſs of it, is Evident, whether we conſider Scripture or Reaſon. Scripture ſaith, its not poſſible for the Elect to be ſeduced. *i. e.* Into ſuch Errours or ſins wherby they may miſs Salvation, St. *Mat.* 24. 24. *In ſo much that, if it were poſſible, they ſhall deceive the very Elect.* Whoever are *Blinded*, ſo as to miſs Salvation, the *Election Obtains it. i. e*, Thoſe who are Elected by Vertue of their Election *Rom.* 11. 7. And reaſon ſhewes, that whoever are Choſen by God unto Salvation muſt certainly attain it, unleſs God want either *Power*, Effectually to purſue his purpoſe till he have brought it about, or *will*, to do what he is able, neither of which can be ſuppoſed, granting but that which none can with any ſhew of reaſon deny, that God is Omnipotent on the one hand, and all Wiſe on the other.

If he be Almighty, he can Effect whatever he has a mind to bring about; and if he be all Wiſe, he can never alter from what he purpoſes.

The only reaſon why men change and give over purſuing what once they intended, when ſtill it is in their power ſo to purſue it as to attain it, is becauſe they are now of another mind

mind then once they were, and that because they find Inconveniencies now, which formerly they never thought of; but this is their Fooliſhneſs, which is not to be ſuppoſed in the all wiſe God, who perfectly diſcernes whatever might be like to induce him to waive his Choice before he makes it.

3*ly*. Thoſe who are thus united unto Chriſt, are ſuch as are Aprehended by Chriſt for ſome end, and will not be let go by Chriſt till that end be attained. As St. *Paul* was *Apprehended by Chriſt*, ſo are all that are in Chriſt, *Phil.* 3. 12. As our firſt Vnion unto Chriſt, Chriſt takes hold of us by the hand of his Spirit, and we take hold of him by the hand of our faith.

Now that which Chriſt takes hold of us for, is to bring us unto that, which a Chriſtian by his Inclination is Carried out to reach after; *I follow after, that I may Apprehend that, for which alſo I am Apprehended* &c. Now there is no attaining this, which is Holineſs, and Righteouſneſs, in their Perfection, with the peace, Joy and Glory, which is the Neceſſary reſult of theſe, without holding faſt grace, and holding on in good works, in Obedience, patience, and Self-denyall.

Now they being in Chriſts hand, to be brought unto this end, unleſs Chriſt want either power to keep them in his hand, or power while he du's keep them in his hand, to bring them unto that Salvation he deſignes them for, how can thoſe miſs Eternall Life, of whom Chriſt ſaith, *I give unto them Eternall Life, John*, 10. 28. *Who*

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him

are kept by the power of God through Faith unto Salvation 1. *Pet.* 1. 5. They are come unto Christ, got into his hand, and such Christ will not *Cast out*, *John.* 6. 36. It is his Fathers will, he should *Lose none of them*, *Ver.* 39. While he was on earth he kept those God gave him, *John.* 17, 12. *Those that thou gavest me I have kept* &c.

4*ly.* Those who are thus united unto Christ, are such as have a Love to God and Christ, and Christ has a Love to them; now such no Temptations can Separate, it is Christs Love to them, that makes him Joyn himself to them, it is their love to Christ which makes them Close with him. Now these Christ will always love, for his love is an *Everlasting Love*, *Jere.* 31. 3. *Whom he loves he loves to the End*. *John.* 13. 1. And this love of Christ Engages his Wisdome, and Power for their Protection, and no Temptations be they never so great are able to prevail against these, *Rom.* 8. 35. 39. *God will not Suffer them to be Tempted above what they are able* &c. 1. *Cor.* 10. 13. These, by God's help shall never overcome them so far, as to make them willing to leave Christ, and Christ will not leave them, though they should be willing to leave him, much less when they are not.

5*ly.* They are Sealed by the Spirit unto Salvation 2. *Cor.* 1. *Who hath also Sealed us. Ye are Sealed with the holy Spirit of promise which is the Earnest*, &c. *Greive not the holy Spirit of God.* God by giving them his Spirit, do's that to them which

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men do by ſetting to their Seals, or by giving Earneſt, they do confirm the bargain, and make ſure the performance of it; So that hereby God's truth and faithfulneſs is engaged to make good the Salvation which he by the Seal and earneſt, has Obliged himſelf unto; which he cannot do without keeping them from Totall and finall Apoſtaſy 1. *Theſ.* 5. 24. *Faithfull is he who has called you,* 1. *Cor.* 1. 8. 9. *Who ſhall confirm you unto the End* &c. *God is faithfull by whom ye were called.*

6*ly.* Uniting a Soul unto Chriſt as to its Foundation, is Gods work, which he begins with a deſign to Compleat, for this is an Imperfect work in its ſelf; the laying of a Foundation is good to nothing unleſs their follow a Building on the Foundation, and a perfecting the Building you ſhall not meet with any man who is in his Wits, that lets his work reſt Immediately after he has laid the Foundation, unleſs he be diverted by more urgent Buſineſs, or hindred by downright Violence, as the *Jewes* were in the Building of the Temple.

Now this being God's work he'le perfect as well as begin it, *For all God's works are perfect Deut.* 32. 4. He leaves them not half done. This made St. *Paul* Confident of the *Philippians* doing well, *Phil.* 1. 6. God had begun and he could not Believe but he would go on.

7*ly.* For all ſuch as are Vnited to Chriſt, Chriſt did pray on Earth, and ſtill Intercedes

in

Heaven. What he prayed for *Peter*, he preſſes God for all, that their *Faith may not fail*, however Satan be let out to Tempt them, *Luke*. 22. 32. He prays that God would *Keep them from Evil*. *John*. 17. 5. And this he begs not only for his Diſciples that then attended him. *But for all that ſhould Beleive on him through their words Verſe*. 2. Therefore it cannot be pretended that this prayer was made for ſome few and not for all Chriſts Members. Now if the *Prayer of a Righteous Man* be ſo *Effectuall Jam*. 5. 6. Shall we think that the prayer of Chriſt, who is the Holy one of God, the Son of God, that it ſhall prevail? nothing? may Chriſtians be Confident *That if they ask any thing According to God's will he hears them*, 1, *Joh*, 5. 14. And may they not be as Confident that if Chriſt aske any thing he ſhall not be denyed? he himſelf was ſo, *John* 11. 41. 42. *I know that thou heareſt me always*. And St. *Paul* upon this account was very Confident that none could riſe up againſt him to Condemn him, or otherwiſe hurt him, becauſe Chriſt *Interceded* for him, among others *Rom*, 8. 34.

8*ly*. This is the great thing which thoſe who are Vnited to Chriſt do moſt Prize, Love, and deſire, ſeek, and pray for, that they may be *Eſtabliſhed* in what is good, 1. *Pet*. 5. 10. *Peter* begged no more for the diſperſed *Jewes*, then every Sincere Chriſtian begs for himſelf, that they may be kept from the *Evil of Temptations*. *Mat*, 6. 13, Chriſt Teaches them thus to pray by his Spirit,

Spirit that they may be made *To go in the Paths of his Commandments Pſal.* 119. 35. *Make me to go* &c. *Incline mine heart* &c. *Turn away mine Eyes* &c. Now ſhall not he *who fulfills the Deſire of ſuch as fear him, Pſal.* 145. 19. Anſwer them in theſe which are ſo every way agreeable to his will? When they deſire to be kept Cloſe to God, and God deſires it too; Shall the Devil, or the World, or the Fleſh be able to hinder it? When God bids them *Aſk, Seek, Knock,* and Encourages them to this, by telling them they ſhall *Receive, Find,* and get *Opened, Mat.* 7. 7. And when they follow his Counſell, and obey his Commands and take heart by his Encouragements, will he diſapoint them?

9*ly*. God is Engaged by Covenant to keep them from falling, and therefore he is Engaged to do his utmoſt Towards this, and he is able to do what he has Engaged to do, *Jude.* 24. *Now unto him who is able to keep you from Falling* &c. This is the Tenure of the New Covenant which God has Entered into with every one who is Really Vnited to Chriſt, to *Put his Law in their Inward parts and Write it in their hearts* &c. Jere. 31. 33. *That he'le neither depart from them nor they from him,* Jere. 32. 39. 40. *They ſhall fear him for ever* &c. *That he'le cauſe them to walk in his Statutes and Keep his Judgments and do them,* Ezek, 36. 27. *That he'le betroth them to himſelf for ever* &c. Hoſe, 2. 19. 20. *That the Mountains ſhould ſooner depart, and the Hills be Removed*

moved &c. *Isai.* 54. 9. 10. That *his Spirit shall not depart from them, nor their Seed, Isai.* 59. 11. Indeed these promises seem to be made unto *Israel* after the Flesh, but they were designed for *Israel* after the Spirit; the *Jewes* Literall are but a Type of the *Jewes* Mysticall, and the promises, which were made to them in the Letter, according to their more Spirituall and high meaning belong to the True *Israel* of God. And we have the very same things promised in the New Testament, though in other Terms, that God will Build his Church so on a Rock that *Hells Gates*, with all the power and policy of Hell, *cannot prevail against it*, *Mat.* 16. 18. And that the *Spirit*, which God gives his People, *shall abide with them for ever*; *John.* 14. 16. Its true also, that these promises are not sensibly made good to his People of a long while, yet even then they are Really made good, though not so fully as they shall be; they cleave to God; when their hearts seem to wander from him, they fear God, when their *Hearts* seem most *hardened from his Fear*.

2*dly*. In those, who are truly United unto Christ, Sin is so Mortified as never to recover Life again, and the Soul is so Quickened as never to die again, no more than Christ died after he once rose; Those who are Really United unto Christ, are Baptized into his Death, so as they begin to die unto Sin, and though Sin do's not die forthwith in them, no more than Christ dies immediately after he was Nailed on the Cross

yet they continue dying by degrees, as Christ did, untill they be quite dead, and they are *Baptized into his Resurrection*, so as to be Raised to a new Life which shall no more die than Christ did, after he was once Raised. And this is the importance of *Rom.* 6. 3. 11: *Know ye not that so many of us, as were Baptized into Jesus Christ, were Baptized into his Death? Likewise reckon your selves Dead unto Sin, but alive to God.* And those whom it is thus with, can never fall either *Totally* or *Finally*.

1 *ly*. Those who thus fall, evidence that whatever they seemed, they never really were United unto Christ, for if they had been, they would have kept to him. It will appear, *that we are Christs house, if we hold on to the end*, Heb. 3. 6. *We are partakers of Christ, if we hold to the End*, V. 14. It will appear *that we are Disciples indeed, if we continue in Christs words*, St. John. 8. 31. He saith not, we shall be *Partakers* of *Christ*, or we shall be *Christs Disciples*; but we are already, if we have that in us, which will make us Stedfast. It will appear that we are *Sons*, if we *abide in Gods house for ever*, V. 35. 'Tis a certain Sign that those were never of the true Church of Christ, who at any time *go out from it*, 1. *John* 2. 19.

But, you will say, what Reason is there, why those who are thus Built on Christ, cannot fall neither *Totally* nor *Finally*?

I answer First, because the Foundation it self cannot fail, it being the *Rock of Ages Psa.* 26. *Jesus Christ is the same Yesterday, and to day, and for*

ever,

ever. Heb. 13, 8. He is a *sure Foundation*. Isa. 28. 16.

2*ly*. The Union between the Soul and Christ the Foundation cannot be dissolved. On Christs part it cannot, because he is altogether Unchangeable. On the Souls part it cannot, because Tho it be mutable in it self, yet it is Established in Christ. There is a double Reason of its Establishment.

1*st*. From the *Nature of that Life*, which Springs up in it from the Foundation of Life, Christ, unto whom it is United. This continually springing up keeps the will, which otherwise would be fickle enough, steadily bent for God the same way Heaven-ward; hence it is, that *he, who is Born of God, cannot Sin*. St. John 3. 9. For there is no Sin, but what is Voluntary, now their will is already Engaged for God: They may do, what ought not to be done, through Ignorance or weakness, being overpowered by Temptations, Transported by Lusts and Passions, but their Will cannot fully consent to Sin, because it is otherwise preingaged. Thus a Weather-Cock is very mutable of it self, but if there be a Wind, that Blows on it continually, that keeps continually in the same Quarter, the Weather-Cock it selfe will keep Immoveable; thus a Cork or some such light thing is easily moveable this way or that way, but if it be cast into a stream, which continually moves the same way, it is determined to a certain motion.

3*y*. From the *Power of God*, which helps it against whatever would move it.

To make this help God is inclined both by his infinite goodness, and his peculiar Love to them; he is obliged by his faithful promise, he having said, *I will Strengthen thee, I will help thee, I will uphold thee with the Right hand of my Righteousness*, Esa. 41. 10.

He is concerned, as he consults his own *Honour*, which is Engaged to bring those into *Canaan*, whom he has brought out of *Egypt*, and Suffer not them to perish in the Wilderness: He is Enabled by his unsearchable *Wisdom*, his Irresistible *power*, and his being every where *present*, and continuing to *Eternity*, so that in no time or place can there any Temptation befall his People, which he is not acquainted with, and which he is not every way able to secure them against.

As for the *Exceptions* against this *Truth*, they are several.

1*st*. Those, Who should best understand this, if it were so, seem to doubt of it; as St. *Paul*, 1. Cor. 9. 27. *Lest by any means, when I have Preached to others, I my self should be a Castaway*, Phil. 3. 11. *If by any means I might attain to the Resurrection of the Dead*.

Ans. If this instance were brought of any other besides St. *Paul* and some of like eminent graces with him, or if it was brought of St. *Paul* when he lay under some great Temptation, we might

might answer, that tho' this were never so certain a Truth, yet those who lye under much darkness (As even these, *who are called into the Marvellous light of God*, during the Disadvantages of this life do) may question it. But I rather say, St. *Paul* there does not declare, that he doubts lest he should become *a Reprobate*, or lest he should come short of that eminent Grace, which he Expresses by the *Periphrasis* of the *Resurrection of the Dead*; but he declares, that if he did not use due means to avoid being a *Reprobate*, and to attain the *Resurrection of the dead*, he might be *a Reprobate* and miss that *Resurrection*; and therefore he could not but bestir himself in the use of means, that he might avoid this danger. He who says, he puts on hard, lest he should not get to his journeys end that night, does not declare, that he doubts he shall not get to his journeys end, though he should ride never so hard: he only declares, that without riding hard he expects it not, and if he do but ride hard, he fears it not.

Obj. 2. But what need there any caution, when there is no danger. *Thou standest by Faith, be not high minded, but fear. Rom.* 11. 20. *Let him, that thinketh he standeth, take heed least he fall.* 1. *Cor.* 10. 12.

Ans. 1. Though there be no falling from *Saving Grace*, yet there may be from *Common Grace*. He that has the Talent and improves it not, may lose it. There are none that deny,

but *Common Grace*, which is only the *workings* of the *Spirit* upon a man, may be loſt. And it is a Diſadvantage to loſe it (Tho' of it ſelf it is not Sufficient to Salvation) both becauſe thoſe, who have common grace are nearer to Salvation than thoſe, who have it not, and alſo becauſe, if they ſhould miſs of Salvation, they are however even by Common Grace reſtrained from many ſins, which otherwiſe they would run into, and thereby Aggravate their own Guilt and increaſe there miſery. Seing therefore, many of thoſe the Apoſtle wrote to, were ſuch as had but a common work of Grace upon them, (as the Generality of the Viſible *Church* ordinarily have no more) ſuch cautions as theſe might be of uſe to them.

2*ly*. Tho' one who has *Saving Grace*, cannot fall *Totally* and *Finally* from *Grace*, yet they may fall in part, and for a while; they may loſe much of there light and Strength, and thereby be leſs holy, & unblameable, and Exemplary in their Lives, and have leſs Comfort in their hearts, God may be leſs pleaſed and honoured by them, and others leſs edified. Now this is ſo Conſiderable a diſadvantage, that they may well be Concerned to take heed of incurring it.

3*ly*. Tho' thoſe, who have *Saving Grace*, be in no danger of falling quite from it, yet it is not to be Expected, they ſhould be preſerved without their own Watchfulneſs and

Warineſs

Wariness. That which is the great security of Gods People in their grace is, that one part of their Grace is a fear of God, and a Jealousy of themselves, and that which does Excite this fear, and awaken this Jealousy in them is the being cautioned of their danger. This makes them *work out their Salvation with fear and Trembling*, *Phil.* 2. 12. Though the nurse have such hold of the Child, as to keep it from falling, yet to make it more cautious in its walking, she may Fright it by minding it of the danger it is in of falling, if it be left to it self, and this fear of falling may be one means to keep it on its Legs.

Obj. 3. But does not this open a door to all Licentiousness, to tell men that they cannot fall away from Christ? May they not then say we may do as we list?

Ans. 1*st*. Those, whom we assert to be past this danger, are only such, whose hearts are firmly principled with a Love to Holiness and Righteousness, and an hatred of all Impurity and iniquity; and those who are such, would not allow themselves in sin, though they should not apprehend any disadvantage by it.

2*ly*. Those know well that what mainly secures them against this great danger of falling away, is that Principle of fear, which God has Implanted in them, and that it is the exercise of this, which is the means to preserve them.

3*ly*. Even those know, that should they give way unto Corruptions and Temptations, tho' they do not fall away, yet they may incur other Inconveniences, whereby their *Sorrows may be Multiplied, and Gods Judgements* may be heaped upon them. None can expect to gain by presuming to sin, because they are so joyned to *Christ* as they cannot be separated from him; God will follow them with such *Inward Terrours*, and outward pressures, as will weary them out of all these sinfull Courses.

Use. 1*st*. This shews the Excellent state, to which *Christians* (such as are so indeed) are arrived. They have got *Grace*, which is the most precious thing in the World, for it is the seed of *Glory*.

They are got into Gods favour, that favour, which is the Originall of all Blessings whatsoever both of Soul and body: They are *Sons of Gods*, *Brethren of Christ*, *Temples of the Holy-Ghost*, *Heirs of Heaven*, *Objects of Gods Love and care*, *the Charge of his Provideace*. And what makes all these advantages compleat is, that they are so firmly stated in them, that they can never wholly lose them; whereas all worldly Enjoyments and accomplishments are Exposed to variety of hazards, even the firmest and surest of them. What reason then have those, who are advanced thus high, to give thanks to their *Good God* for

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what he has already done for them and further intends them? What need they care, though they want many of the Conveniences of the world which others have, when they have that, which is Incomparably of Greater worth, which the Generality of the *World* are without?

2*ly*. Take heed of taking up with such Attainments in *Grace*, as may be loſt again; That which may be loſt, can never Everlaſtingly Advantage us; we are not Rooted and Grounded in it. *We are not born again of Corruptible Seed, but of Incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* 1. *Pet.* 1. 23. Indeed *Common Grace* is better than no *Grace*, as it is a ſtep nearer *Saving Grace*, and as it Reſtrains from ſuch Extravagances as would increaſe our Miſery in *Hell*, but it is not to be Reſted in, how Specious ſoever it be, becauſe it cannot aſſure us of *Heaven*, nor ſecure us from *Hell*.

We ſhould therefore be much in Examining our ſelves, whether that *Grace*, which we pleaſe our ſelves in, have *a Root* and *a Spring* within us; if not, it will not laſt long, it will never abide the *Tryals*, it ſhall ſhall meet with in Life and Death. If it be not *a New Nature* in us, altering the very bent and Inclinations of our hearts,

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it will never continue. If the *Living Word* be not ingrafted in us, it will never ſtay long with us.

Whoever they be that think, that *Saving Grace* may be ſo eaſily loſt, it is much to be doubted, whether ever they knew the *Power* of it, what a great *Alteration* it works in the Soul.

St. Mat.

St. Mat. 7. 26. 27.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be Likened unto a Foolish man, which Built his house upon the Sand: And the Rain descended, & the Flouds came, & the Winds blew & beat upon that House: and it Fell, and great was the Fall of it.

OUR Saviour having shewn his hearers in the first part of the *Parable*, what it is to Build wisely, shews them now in the Second Part, what it is to Build Foolishly: In this part we have the *Builder* and the *Building*.

In the *Builder* we have.

1st. His *Practice*; he does something, he willingly Embraces the Easier part of *Religion*, he *hears*: Be the *Doctrine* never so pure, Spirituall

and

and Practicall; he can bear it, or at the worſt can give it the hearing; but the main thing he omits, he does little or however little to purpoſe, he either does nothing, or however not all.

2ly. *His Character*, he is a *Fool*: It may be he conceits himſelf *Wiſe*, in that he uſes prudence to diſtinguiſh between the Different parts of *Religion*, culling out the eaſy part and Leaving the Difficult, Cloſing with the creditable and profitable part, and waving the Ignominious and prejudiciall part, whereas others Fooliſhly graſp the *Flower* and *Prickle* together, and while they ſtrive to gain by *Religion* on the one hand, loſe by it on the other. Yet he is but a *Fool*; God knows him to be ſo, and ſo in the Iſſue he will be counted both by himſelf and others, when he has ruined himſelf by that, which he thought would advantage him.

In the *Building* we have.

1ſt. The *Manner* of this *Building*, how it is begun and Carried on. The *Foundation* of it is laid in the *Sand*, and on ſuch a *Foundation* the *Superſtructure* is Raiſed. Now the *Sand*, being only an heap of little Particles altogether incoherent one with another, Eaſily admits into it ſelf *Water* from the *Floods* of the *Sea* or *River* adjacent, which frequently overflow it from above, and *Water* from the *Quick Springs*, which ariſe from Beneath and Eaſily inſinuate into it, whereby it muſt needs be Exceedingly weakened,

and

and ſo Rendred unfit to ſupport firmly any mighty *Superſtructure*, at leſt for any Conſiderable Time.

2*ly*. The *Tryal* of the *Building*. Even this is ſet upon by Showers, Floods, and Winds on every ſide, it ſtanding ſomewhat higher than that *Earth* which is round about it, though it be altogether unacquainted with thoſe Violent Aſſaults, which the other meets with, it uſually falling, before it be greatly put to the Streſs.

3*ly*. *The Proof* of this *Building*. Tho poſſibly it may ſtand for ſome time, yea even after it is begun to be Aſſaulted, it tumbles not at the firſt *Fall of Rain*, the firſt *daſh* of a *Floud* nor the firſt *Blaſt of wind*, yet at Laſt it falls, yea *And great is the fall of it*: It falls *Suddenly*, few or none Expecting the Fall of it; it falls *Totally*, no part of it Remaining Standing; it falls *Irrecoverably*, ſo as never to be in a Condition for Rebuilding again.

Doct. 1*ſt*. *There are ſome, that content themſelves to hear Chriſts ſayings, but never heed to do them.* There were ſuch ſort of People in *Ezekiels* time *Chap*. 33. *V*. 31. *They come unto thee, as the People cometh, and they ſit before thee as my People, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them*. And ſome in *Jeremiah's* time, that went ſomewhat beyond theſe, who not only came to hear that *Prophet* and profeſſed that they deſired to hear him, that they might know, what they ought to do, yea and promiſed, they would do whatever

whatever he declared to them in Gods name they should do; yet for all that, when they are told what they pretend they desire to know, they obey not. *Chap.* 42. *v.* 1. 6. and *chap.* 43. *v.* 2. Such were those in *Moses* his Time, *Deut.* 5. 27. Yet those are the very People, who (all but two persons) were cut off in the *Wilderness* for their great Disobedience. Many of these no doubt *Christ* did observe in his Time, which gave him occasion to detect their *Folly* in this Text; we read of Thousands who Flocked after him, *five Thousand* at one Time St. *Mat.* 14. 21. *four Thousand* at another besides *Women and Children.* S. *Mat.* 15. 38. Whom it is probable he taught as well as fed; yet do we not find, that he left many faithful *Obeyers* of his *Doctrine.* Yea many of his hearers turned *Persecutors* of him, as many of his Servants have Experienced the like from their hearers, witness S. *Stephen. Acts* 7. 57. and S. *Paul. Acts.* 22. 12. It was not an Impertinent caution which St. *James* gave, *Jam.* 1. 22. *Be ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* He knew that many of those, whom he wrote to, greatly needed it.

1*st.* Of these some come to hear without the least *Intention* to do what they hear. Men are induced to come to *Church* for many other ends besides *Hearing*: Some come to see and be seen, as many People go to *Markets* and *Fairs*, not that they have any Business there, but they can find

find nothing to do at home, and they have a mind to look about them. Thus even *Dogs* love to be where most company is stirring. Others come to please such as they have some Dependance upon, and expect some Advantage by, whether they be *Masters*, or *Parents*, or *Neighbours*, or *Friend*. It may be these either intreat or command them to come, or otherwise Express, that it is their *Pleasure*, they should come, and they are afraid to incur their *Displeasure*; they would not be frowned upon, nor chid, nor incur any Inconvenience by not coming, yet if they had only themselves to please, they had rather sit at home, and sleep, or drink, or play, or else go abroad to some Idle People like themselves, and spend their time with them in vain Talking. Others come for their credits sake, that they may not be looked on among sober People as such as are wholly void of all sense of *Religion*; such as have neither Reverence to *God*, nor care of their own *Souls*; such as believe *Heaven* and *Hell* to be meerly the *Dreams* of *Melancholique Fools*, which please themselves with their own dotings, or else the *Devices* of *Subtle Politicians*, to keep simple People within Bounds. Others come to save themselves from the Lash of the *Law*, which requires People attending, where they may hear, under several *Penalties*. And it may be it would be better for some *Souls*, if these *Penalties* were more strictly Exacted; This might put them

them upon using those means of *Grace*, which *God* has provided for them, if not for Love of their *Souls*, which the Generality have little sense of, and little concern for, yet however for Love of their *Purses*. Others come to quiet their *Consciences*: there is in most People an Inward Sense of a *Deity*, which they cannot shake off without offering extreme *Violence* to the *Faculties* of their *Souls*: this restlessly puts them upon doing something, which may be pleasing to the *God*, in whose hands themselves, their Comfort and their Hopes are.

Now there are but two things, which an awakened *Conscience* can Expect, should find acceptance with God.

1*st*. *Holiness* and *Righteousness* in the *Principles* and *Practices* of them, which comprehend under them Faith, Love, Meekness, Lowliness, Patience, Resignedness &c. With the various Expressions of them.

2*ly*. *Outward Means*, which being diligently and Faithfully made use of might, through the Influences of the Good *Spirit*, bring unto these Gracious Principles and Practises.

The *First* of these, considering the degeneracy of our nature, are very remote from us, and not to be attained without Difficulty. The *Second* are near to us, and we may use them in some sort without any Care, Toil, and Trouble. Now those, who have some *Conscience*, must have something to quiet it with. And those, who have

have but a little *Conſcience*, can get it quieted with a ſmall matter; and thoſe, who are lovers of their own *Eaſe* and *Pleaſure*, would be at as little coſt and Trouble with their *Conſcience* as may be. Now it is as cheap a way of *Pleaſing God* as can be (if it would but ſerve) to give him the hearing, as to what he ſpeaks outwardly by his written *Word*, and by his *Miniſters*, and when that is done, to do what they liſt.

Obj. But is it Poſſible, that men ſhould be ſo Swayed with theſe *Collaterall Inducements*, to come to hear, and not at all be touched with the ſenſe of the *Great Inducement*, which is the *Saving* of the *Soul*? And ſure if they had any regard to that, they could not ſatisfie themſelves in *Hearing* without *Doing*.

Anſ. Indeed we muſt needs grant this Laſt, that they could not: no more than the *Patient*, who is grievouſly Troubled with a Vexatious and Dangerous *Malady*, can reſt meerly in hearing what the *Phyſician* talks to him, without uſing the *Remedies* which he preſcribes. For alaſs! What does it advantage a man to hear of the *cauſes* of his *Malady*, or the *means* of his *Recovery*, if notwithſtanding all his hearing, he continue afflicted with it, as he muſt do, untill he make uſe of what may help him? But yet it is too Ordinary with men to have little ſenſe of the *Poverty* and *Miſery* the *Soul is in*, little Ap-

prehenſion of the Danger it is Expoſed to; they little feel, how much it is their Concernment to provide for their *Souls* and for *Eternity*, whatever become of this *Body* and its *Temporall Life*. Hence it is, that any thing ſooner prevails with them to hear, than that which ſhould prevail with them: They are Carnall, Senſual, worldly, Selfiſh, therefore thoſe Conſiderations work with them, which ſuit theſe Principles.

They know not, that their *Souls* need ſo much, to yield them full and Laſting Satisfaction, that which the enjoyment of the choiceſt Creature Comforts in the greateſt fullneſs and Security can never Promiſe them. They know not, that their *Souls* lies Enſlaved to thoſe luſts, which they muſt get compleatly freed from, or elſe it is Impoſſible they ſhould be happy unto *Eternity*. There can in no wiſe be any true Peace, any true Joy, where Pride and Covetouſneſs, Envy, Wrath and Malice, Love of fleſhly eaſe and Pleaſure, or any one of them, or any branch of them are Predominant. They know not, what great Temptations they lie open to on every hand, from without, from within, from the *World*, from *Satan* to draw them to *Sin*, to withdraw them from *Duty*, to detain them in thoſe *Luſts* and *Pleaſures*, which they have once given way unto. They know not, that they can in no wiſe free themſelves from this Poverty, Miſery, and Danger by all their own *Policy* and

power,

power, when they have improved them to the utmoſt to help themſelves by them: The *Grace* of *God* muſt powerfully put in for their Relief, or elſe they infallibly periſh, and there is no help for them. They know not, that it is *Gods* Ordinary *Method* to Viſit thoſe with his *Grace*, which meet him in the uſe of thoſe *Means* he preſcribes, yet not Expecting from the *Means*, but from *God*, working in them, with them, and by them. Thoſe he Quickens, thoſe he ſtrengthens, thoſe he Excites, he Aſſiſts and Directs. He never fails to do for thoſe, who do the utmoſt they can for themſelves; Who have ſuch an earneſt deſire to be delivered from the *Power* of their *Luſts*, to be Reclaimed from the *Evill* of their *Ways*, that they Readily make uſe of whatever means may help them herein.

2*ly*. Others come to hear with ſome *Intention* to do what they hear, but with no *full*, no *ſettled Intention*.

1*ſt*. They come not with a *Full Intention*; ſomething they are willing and ready to do, what they can do with eaſe, Credit, advantage and Safety, but other things they cannot afford to do. *Jehu* will hear the *Prophet* in whatever he ſpeaks Concerning the Deſtruction of *Ahabs* Family, and the Extirpation of *Baals* worſhip, for theſe not only conſiſt with his *Intereſt*, but are very Subſervient to it: But as for the Pull-

ing down the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, in this he muſts needs pardon him, he cannot do it without Shaking the very Foundations of his Kingdome, 2. *Kings* 10. 29. *Johanan* and *Jezaniah*, the Captains and the People are *Gods* very humble Servants, they are willing and ready to do whatever he bids them; only with this *Proviſo*; that he bid them do nothing, which Thwarts either their Inclination or Intereſt: If God do but Require them to do what they have a great mind to do themſelves, they will not in the leſt ſtick to obey him, but if *God* will need croſs them, and when they have a mind to go into *Egypt*, charge them to ſtay in *Judea*, he muſt excuſe them, it is but reaſon they ſhould ſerve themſelves in the firſt Place. *Jere.* 43. 24. *Herod* can well endure to hear *John* the *Baptiſt*, yea, he will hear him gladly, and do many things alſo which he bids him do, Reform many things in his *Kingdom*, many things in his *Court*, and ſome things in himſelf; he will Countenance good People and good Miniſters, ſuch as *John*, he will Check thoſe who would Suppreſs and deſtroy them, ſuch as the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* St. *Mark* 6. 20. If *John* will but connive at one or two things in *Herod*, *Herod* and he will never fall out; but if *John* be ſo unreaſonable as to require him to part with his *Herodias*, *Herod* will never obey him in this, Let *John* ſay what he will: He cannot Brook to have *Princes* Pleaſures intruded

into

into and Medled with by ſuch Sawcy Fellows as *John*; If *Herod* for *John* cannot quietly keep and enjoy his *Herodias*, *John* for *Herod* ſhall not long keep his head. *Judas* will hear *Chriſt*, and obey him too, ſo far as to leave his Eſtate and Friends to Follow a poor deſpiſed *Jeſus*, yea, he will keep to him, tho' Envyed, Hated, Reproached and perſecuted by the Wiſe and great men of this *World*, thoſe who are uppermoſt both in *Church* and *State*; yea, if *Chriſt* will bid him preach to a People that will deride him, and Scoff at him, and otherwiſe contumeliouſly uſe him, he will not ſtick at this neither; but let *Chriſt* bid him, *Take heed and beware of Covetouſneſs*, S. *Luke*. 12. 15. It is to no purpoſe: he is Reſolved to hug this *Darling Sin*, tho it ſhould prove his Ruine. The *Young Man* is deſirous to hear of *Chriſt*, *what he muſt do to be Saved*; he can patiently endure to hear all the *Commandments* preſt upon him, and *Obedience* to them required of him; Let *Chriſt* ſay *Thou ſhalt do no Murder* &c. He will hear *Chriſts* Doctrine, yea, approve it and obey it too. But if *Chriſt* come a little too near the *Quick*, and tell him he muſt part with all his Lands, his Barns and his bags, If he would come to good, this he can abide no longer, away he goeth *Sorrowfull* S. *Mat*. 19. 16. 22.

2*ly*. They come not with a *Settled Intention*. There are few ſo bad, but they have now and

then ſtirring in them ſome good deſires, ſome good Intentions, yea, ſome ſuch *Intentions* as are Heightened into *Reſolutions*: for there are none, if they be not quite left by *God*, whom the *Spirit* of *God*, is not now and then dealing with to Engage them for *Heaven* and *Holineſs*: But all theſe good thoughts, deſires and Intentions are but *As a Morning Cloud, and as the Early Dew they go away. Hoſ.* 6. 4. They abide but a little while, any new Temptation daſhes them all. The *Intentions* and *Reſolutions* of many men, but like the Efforts of dying men, which are very Vigorous for a while, but they have ſoon done, as is ſeen in thoſe, who are deadly wounded, who go ſtrongly a while, but ſoon fall dead to the Ground.

They are *Almoſt Perſwaded* to do this and that, as *Agrippa* was to be *a Chriſtian, Acts* 26. 28. But they are ſoon of another mind, and their good thoughts prove very *Volatile*.

There is a double *Account* of the *Fadingneſs* of their *Good Intentions*.

1*ſt*. They are incited in an *Heart*, where there is nothing Suitable to them, as *heat* in *Water*, whoſe *Nature* is quite contrary to this *Quality*, for let *Water* be made never ſo hot, if it be left to it ſelf, it Quickly *Cools* again. *A Fiſh* will not ſtay long out of its *Element*, it finds nothing to nouriſh

nouriſh and Cheriſh it, but every thing is Troubleſome to it. It is with *Good thoughts, deſires, Intentions and Reſolutions* as it is with *Grain* in an *Unſuitable Soil.* They never come to any thing, like *The Seed, which fell among Thorns,* that ſoon *Stifled it. Luke.* 8. 14. Some *Luſt* or other gets up, and quite *Choakes* whatever good is ſtirring *in a bad Heart,* for it has no *Root* there and can gather no *Strength,* and ſo is Eaſily overpowered.

2*ly.* They are aſſaulted by ſeverall *Temptations* from the *World* and *Satan. The Buſineſſes* of the *World* ſo throng men, that they have little *Leiſure* to Proſecute whatever *Intentions* they have, which may advantage them for *Heaven. The cares* of the *World* do ſo fill the *Heads* of many, that they have little *Room* for any *Serious Thoughts,* they quite forget all their *Good Intentions. The Pleaſures* of the *World* and the *Fleſh* do ſo poſſeſs *mens Hearts,* and take up their *Time,* that they have neither *Leiſure* nor *Will* for thoſe things which in their *good moods,* they once intended. *Satan* by his *Suggeſtions* either directly oppoſes the Proſecuting of *good Intentions,* repreſenting to men the *great Inconveniences,* which thoſe *Courſes* threaten, that they may prejudice us in our *Bodies, Eſtates, Credit, Liberty, and Relations*; that they may bring *inward Diſquiet and Outward Vexation*; Or elſe he ſubtilly diverts us, perſwading us, that there is ſome-

thing more Pertinent, more Neceſſary to be done by us for the Preſent, and that we may let this alone till *Another time*, when we ſhall have more *Leiſure* and fairer *Opportunities*. Thus *Felix* thought of hearing S. *Paul* further, but he would put it off to *a more Convenient ſeaſon*. *Acts.* 24. 25. *Satan* knows that if he can but delay the *Execution* of *Good Intentions*, he prevents them, for they ſoon die of themſelves.

Uſe. 1*ſt.* This ſhews the *great folly*, which is in mens hearts. And this their Folly appears in two things.

1*ſt.* In that they *content* themſelves with that which is to no *Purpoſe* at all. For let them *Hear* never ſo much, and gain thereby a great deal of *Knowledge*, if they do not reduce their *Knowledge* into *Practiſe*, and *do* as they *Hear*, they are never the nearer. To what *Purpoſe* doth a man know, what will cure his *Diſeaſe*, and what will heal his *wound*, if he never look out to procure the *Medicine*, if he never care to uſe and applie it, but ſuffer the *Diſeaſe* to to prevail and the *wound* to Corrupt, untill they have killed him? To what *Purpoſe* is it for a man to know the ready and certain way to the *Place*, where he may get all his Neceſſities ſupplied, if, when he knows the *way*, he never offers to take it, but reſts where he is till he *periſh* through Hunger, Thirſt and Nakedneſs?

2*ly.*

2*ly*. In that they *pleaſe* themſelves, in that which will certainly *prejudice* them. For men had much better not know *Gods will*, than when they do *know* it, not to *do* it. Their ſin becomes more heinous. *S. John.* 9. 41. *Jeſus ſaid unto them, if ye were Blind, ye ſhould have no Sin; but now ye ſay, we ſee; therefore your Sin Remaineth.* Chriſt here aggravates the Sin of the *Phariſees*, in that they ſinned with their *Eyes* open. *If ye were Blind, ye ſhould have no Sin. i. e.* None in *Compariſon* of what now ye have. The more *will* there is in any *Sin*, the more *Wickedneſs* alſo, and the more *Knowledge* there is, the more *will*. And their *Judgment* becomes of more *Grievous*, like that of the *Servant, which knew his Lords will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will*, and therefore was adjudged to be *Beaten with many Stripes. S. Luke.* 12. 47. God is more highly *provoked* by thoſe, who preſume to do what they know is contrary to his *will*, and therefore he will more ſeverely Puniſh them. And it adds to the *Weight* of their *Judgement*, when our *Conſcience* has greater *Reaſon* than Ordinary to upbraid us for bringing our ſelves Voluntariy under it, in that we were told the way to Eſcape it, and intreated, yea Commanded to take this way, and yet we would not.

If any ſhall ſay, that if *Ignorance* ſomewhat Extenuate the *Sin* and alleviate the *Judgment*,

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it will be the wiſeſt courſe to live in *Ignorance*, and to ſhun *Knowledge*.

Let ſuch know, that although *unavoidable Ignorance* extenuates *Sin*, yet *affected Ignorance* aggravates it. When men are deſirous to know, what they ſhould do and omit, and are willing to do their *Duty* according to their *Knowledge*, and Neglect no means, which *God* Vouchſafes them, whereby their *Knowledge* may be increaſed. In this caſe, if they do what ought not to be done, or Neglect what ought not to be Neglected, *God* imputes it to their *Ignorance*, and not to *themſelves*, and he accounts this *Ignorance* their *Unhappineſs*, rather than their *Sin*. He deals with them, as he did with S. *Paul* in the like caſe, *they obtain Mercy, becauſe they do it ignorantly*. 1 *Tim.* 1. 13.

But if men, being deſirous to Sin without any *Check* of *Conſcience*, do therefore ſhun to know their *Duty*, when they have *means* of *Knowledge*, that they may go on in their *Sinfull Omiſſions and Commiſſions* without regret or Reluctancy, their *Ignorance* of their *Duty* doth but make their *Sin* the more heinous. The Reaſon why they do, what they ought not, and do not what they ought, is not becauſe they know not what ought or ought not to be done: For if they did know this Never ſo well, they would do as they do ſtill, therefore their *Ignorance* cannot Excuſe

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that *Sin*, which it has no *Influence* upon. Besides, if their being *Ignorant* of their *Duty* were the *Cause* of their *Transgressing* it, yet they being the *Cause* of their own *Ignorance*, in that they do purposely decline those *means*, which might remove it, lest they should by them come to know their *Duty*, they can in no wise be Excused by their *Ignorance*. Their *Ignorance* in this case is not a bare *Circumstance* of another *Sin*, but a distinct *Sin* in it self, in that it is a *Voluntary* thing in them and their own *Choice*: Yea, 'tis an heinous *Sin* too, in that the *End* it is designed for, is that we may commit *All Wickedness with more Greediness*. He that is naturally *Blind*, if through his *Blindness* he run into some *Mischief*, he is pitied and excused; but he that can see well enough, and yet shuts his *Eyes* on purpose, that he may pretend this as an *Excuse* for his doing a *Mischief*, he is the more *Severely* censured and the more *Grievously* Punished for it.

Use. 2. This shews the *great Untowardness*, which is in Mens hearts, that they are so bad, as to bring forth no *Fruit*, when they have such advantage by *Hearing*, to make them *Fruitfull*. Hereby they are instructed what to do, they learn what *God* does Counsell and command them to do. Hereby they are convinced, how much it is their *Concernment* to do what they are Counselled and Commanded:

manded: It is as much as their *Souls* are worth to Neglect this: It is the certain *Loſs* of *Heaven*, the certain *Incurring* all the *Torments* of *Hell*. Hereby they are directed, how to diſcharge their *duty*, ſo as will make moſt for *Gods Glory* and their own *Advantage*; they are directed, how to get thoſe *Helps*, which may incline and Enable them for their *Duty*, the Quickning and ſtrengthening *Vertue* of the *Spirit*. Hereby they are Encouraged to ſet about their *Duty*, notwitſtanding the *Difficulties* of it, and the *Diſadvantages* by it. Now when men have ſuch Inſtructions, ſuch Convictions, ſuch Directions, ſuch Encouragements to ſet about *Doing*, it is a ſign of great *Naughtineſs* in their *Hearts*, when nothing will make them do their *Duty*, neither *Reſpect* to *God*, nor to *Themſelves* and their own *good*.

Uſe. 3. This ſhews the great *Neceſſity* of geting the *Heart* throughly *Renewed*, getting the *Law* writ in the *Heart*, getting the *Spirit of Life*, which is in *Chriſt*, and Improving thoſe *Promiſes*, whereby *God* does Encourage us to expect theſe great things from him. For then ſhall we both *Know Gods will* and be Willing and ready to do it, but not till then. We may without this *Hear with our outward Ears*, what ever man can tell us of our *Duty* and *Gods will* and

yet

yet never *Underſtand* it; we may *Underſtand*, and never *Believe* it: We may *Believe* (for ſo do the *Devils* in ſome ſenſe) all *Gods word* and never *Obey* it. But when the *Lord has put his Spirit within us, to cauſe us to walk in his ſtatutes Ezek.* 36. 27. We ſhall walk in them. When *God has Created us in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works*, we ſhall *walk in them. Ephes.* 2. 10. *If God Sanctifie us throughout in Spirit, Soul and Body*, we ſhall *be preſerved Blameleſs unto the* Second *coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* 1. *Theſ.* 5. 23.

Uſe 4. This ſhews, how *Unreaſonable* it is to blame *Miniſters* always for the *Unfruitfulneſs* of their *Auditors* and to Reproch them with the *Sins* of their *Hearers*. It is Poſſible, be their *Preaching* never ſo *Powerfull*, their *Lives* never ſo *Unblameable*, they may little prevail with their *Auditors* to bring them unto good.

If men may hear *Chriſts* ſayings from his own mouth, and yet never heed them, when they have done, though there was ſo much *Truth* in his *Doctrine*, ſo much *Power* and *Prudence* in his *way* of *Handling* it, as never can be Expected from any meer man, how much more may they hear what is delivered by others, without

out *Profiting* by it? Take the most *Eminent Preacher*, that ever *Taught*, and let him be the most *Unblameable Liver* that ever *Lived*, yet this may be Retorted upon him.

S. Mat.

St. Mat. 7. 26. 27.

And every one, that Heareth these Sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto a Foolish man, which built his House upon the Sand: And the Rain descended, and the Flouds came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that House; and it Fell, and great was the Fall of it.

I Have shewed you, what is the *Practice* of some *Professors* of *Religion*, they are ready enough to *hear*, but Backward to *do* what they *hear*. Now follows the *Character*, which they meet with, and the *Grounds* of that *Character*. For the Present it may be they *conceit* themselves *wise*, and others who Observe them, *Judge* the same of them too; but when after all their Care, Pains, and Cost, they are so far from being any thing

Advantaged

Advantaged by what they have done, as to be greatly *Prejudiced*; when they are *Disappointed* in their hopes of finding reſt, warmth, plenty and ſecurity in the *houſe* they have been ſo long about; when the *Houſe* they have with ſo much *Trouble* reared, comes Tumbling about their Ears, and either Kills them or leaves them deſtitute of *Harbour*; when things prove thus with them, then it will appear how *Fooliſh* they have been: and this will appear both to themſelves and others.

Doct. 1ſt. Even thoſe who reſt in bare hearing of Chriſt's Sayings without doing them, are in ſome ſort Builders.

For, 1*ſt*. They *Propoſe* the ſame *Ends* to themſelves that *Builders* do. They aim at living more Comfortably and Commodiouſly than they do for the Preſent: They would not be *Expoſed* to thoſe *Neceſſities* and *Inconveniences*, which thoſe who are wholly without *Shelter* cannot avoid. Though they Conſider not how they may do well to *Eternity*, they however Conſider, how they may do well during this *Short uncertain Life*.

2*ly*. They do ſomething in *Religion* in order to the *Attaining* thoſe *Ends*. They will *hear*, be the *Doctrine* never ſo *pure*, the *Counſell* never ſo *Wholeſome*, the *Precepts* never ſo *ſtrict*, the *Promiſes* never ſo *high* and *Spiritual*, the *Threatnings*

Threatnings never ſo *dreadfull* and *Terrible*; be the *Teacher* never ſo *awfull* & *powerfull*. Yea, they will do more than *hear*, they will *Remember* Something too; at leaſt, if there be any thing of *Wit*, of *Reaſon*, or of *Scripture*; if there be any thing to *Inform* the *Judgement*, to *warm* the *Affections*, or to *Reform* the *Life*. They will *Repeat* alſo, they will tell others what they have *heard* and *Obſerved*, and *Retain* ſtill in their Memories. Yea, they will approve and applaud both the *Doctrine* and the *Preacher*, as ſome did *Chriſt*, S. *Joh.* 7. 46. *Never Man ſpake like this man.*

3ly. They *attain* ſomething by what they do, ſomething they rear up, which looketh like a *Building*, which may be of ſome uſe to them.

1ſt. They gain ſome *Reputation* in *matters of Religion* both with *knowing* and *Ignorant* Perſons. Thoſe who are *Ignorant*, admire them, as ſuch as have attained a more then ordinary *Stature* in *Religion*: they ſee others wholly *Neglect*, if they do not greatly *deſpiſe*, whatever looks like *Religion*; and they obſerve in theſe, both as to their *Carriages* and *dealings*, ſomething more of *Civility* and *Honeſty*, than is every where eaſily to be met with, and they are not aware that *Naturall Conſcience*, *Carnall prudence*, and *Worldly intereſt* may make a fair outward *Reformation*, when the heart is ſtark naught. Thoſe who are *knowing* favour them, for they ſee

see them draw nearer to the *power* of *Religion* than other People commonly do, who altogether Neglect the *Form*; and they have so much *Charity* as to hope, that where there is so much *form* without, there may be some *Reality* in the *heart*: However 'tis more pleasing to such as desire *Gods Glory* and *the good of Souls*, when men, notwithstanding what can be said and done, will be *Wicked*, to see them rather *Modestly Wicked* than *Impudently*, as those in *Isai.* 3. 9. *who declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not.*

2*ly*. They make to themselves an *Interest* with those, who Esteem and favour them for what they seem to be. This *Advantage* People several wayes; As to their *Trade* it oft brings *Custom*: men would have those, whom they have the greatest *Value* for, to *thrive* best, and therefore so far as they can without *Prejudice* to themselves, they are willing to *Further* them; men expect the best *Service* from those, whom they have the highest *Opinion* of, and therefore they will rather chuse to deal with them than with others upon either own *Account*. As to their *Marriage*, be they *Men* or *Women*, they are more likely to do well, if they have a *form of Religion* though there be little else, than if they were wholly without it. Upon a Worldly account such *Husbands* and *Wives* are more *Eligible* than others, because they

are more likely to *Order* their *Worldly Business* prudently: There is less *Danger* of their wasting their estates in *Extravagancies*. For a *form of Religion*, if it do no more, does however Restrain People from *Drunkenness*, *Fornication*, and *Expensive Recreations*.

And upon a *Spiritual* account, they are still more *Eligible*: there is *Reason* to hope there may be *Grace*, where there is this *profession*, and those who have *Grace* will be more *Inclinable* to Endeavour the *good* of their *Souls*, whom they come into so near *Relation* unto; and they will be better Capacitated for it, as understanding how the *Good* of the *Soul* may be promoted. But if there be no *Grace*, yet if there be an *Outward* Complying with the *Law of God* there may be some good got by their Example; if there be an using of the *External means of Grace* in Hearing, Reading, praying, &c. (as there will be, where there is any *Profession*) honest Hearts may get some good by this. There are none who have any *Seriousness* in them, who are willing to dispose either of themselves or their *Children* to such as are wholly void of any *shew* of *Religion*, whom they can expect little Comfort with, little Advantage, from in reference to Eternity. Those who are themselves serious, when they may have their *Choice*, are not willing to *Meddle* with the *Children* of others upon

any account, when they know they have not been *Soberly* and *Religiously Educated*. And how can any Expect to find them thus *Educated*, when he, on whom the *main* of their *Education* depends, do's not the least pretend to any *Religion* himself?

3*ly*. They somewhat *Quiet* their own *Consciences*, *Conscience*, if it be not quite Lulled asleep, will be putting people upon doing something, which may conduce towards the *Salvation* of their *Souls*; if nothing at all be done which has some *Tendency* to this, the *Conscience* will in no wise be quiet, unless it be asleep: If something be done, though it be *Insufficient*, this may serve to quiet *Conscience* for a while, Especially when the man by his *Business* and *Recreations* sets himself, as much as he can, to divert himself from all *Conference* with his *Conscience*. Now *Men* endowed with *Reason* are like *Beasts* in this, that they Commonly live by *sense*, and if they may have *ease* for the present, they care not what *Extream misery* they plunge themselves into afterwards.

4*ly*. They please themselves with some *Slight hopes* of doing well to *Eternity*, because as to the *External parts of Religion*, they do as the best do, and they differ much from the generality of the *World*, who pretend to mind nothing but *Earthly things*, therefore they presume they shall be a *Difference* between

them at the great day; and seing here they *separate* themselves in some sort from those, who are openly *loose* and *Wicked*, *God* will *Separate* them hereafter also. Now men like it very well, when by an easy *Piece* of *Formality* they can get themselves raised unto *Hopes*, that it shall be well with them, when this *short Uncertain Life* is at an end, and can withall freely indulge themselves in the *Enjoyment* of whatever *Pleasures* are here below.

Use. Though by our *Religion* we may raise some *Building* for our selves, if it be not such a *Building* as will afford us *Comfort* in the *Greatest distress*, we can be in on this side the *Grave*, either during this *Life* or in *Death*, such as will do us good after this Life, assuring us of *Heaven*, and securing us against *Hell*, we have little reason to rest here. Indeed it is observed in all ages that it is some of this *Building* that undoes most, as *Christ* in his time Observed, that the *Publicans* and *Sinners* were in a fairer way, then *Scribes and Pharisees* *S. Mat.* 21. 31. Not that hearing, reading, praying *&c.* hinders men from *Heaven*, but the Resting in these *Duties* doth, when men pride and please themselves in these, without pressing after something, which is higher and better then these. When men *Build* by their *Religion*, and *Build* nothing to purpose, they Ruin themselves by it. When men have either

no *Religion* at all, or *ſet nothing* by their *Religion*, they are far more eaſily wrought upon, they are more ready to Conſider truth, when it is propoſed, and to ſubmit unto truth, when it is diſcovered. Nothing but an Extraodinary Vivification of *Chriſt*, could take S. *Paul* off from that *Religion* which he had profeſſt, and found advantage by. *Phil.* 3. 7. *What things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt.* Had not *Demetrius* found ſome *Worldly advantage* by the *Religion* he alſo profeſſed, he would never have ſo pertinaciouſly adhered to it, and ſo ſtifly have oppoſed S. *Paul*, when he acquainted him with a better. *Acts* 19. 35.

Doct. 2. *They that only hear Chriſts ſayings but do them not, do only Build on the Sand*, that is, they Build without a *Foundation*, or on ſuch a *Foundation* as will laſt but for a little while.

For 1*ſt*. The *Credit* they get upon a *Religious account* has no *Foundation* they are not Really what they are taken to be, though *they have a form of Godlineſs, they are without the Power of it*, if they do not *deny* it 2 *Tim.* 3. 5. Though *they have a name to live, yet they are Dead. Rev.* 3. 1.

2*ly*. The *Advantage* they make by their *Religion*, as to their *Trades* or *Marriages* has no *Foundation*. All the ground there is for their

their being better *Customed*, and more *Desired* then others are, or their being supposed to be such as truly *fear God*, when they are far from that *Fear*.

3*ly*. The *Quiet* they have in their *Consciences*, is without *Foundation*. It is only grounded on a *Mistake*, that their *Hearts and Lives* are far better then they are, that their *condition* is a great deal safer then it really is.

4*ly*. The *Hopes* they have of *Heaven and Happiness* is without *Foundation*. If they have any *Grounds* for these, it is either because they suppose, that all who *Profess Religion*, shall go to *Heaven*; and if so, then will *Judas* and *Simon Magus* also, for they were great *Professors* in their time: or else they suppose, that there is some *reason* for their going to *Heaven*, when others are excluded thence, whereas notwithstanding that *Profession*, they still have as *Vile natures* as any have.

Now thus it must needs be, because there are but two *Foundations*, on which to raise and continue any of these advantageous *Buildings*; and both these are wanting in Men, who *Hear Christs sayings*, but do them not.

1*st*. Real *Goodness* within. And this can in no wise be, where there is no *change* of *Nature*, and there will never be any *change*, where *Christs words* are only heard, but never

never *heeded*. The main *Drift* of all *Christs Discourses* are to bring unto *Regeneration*, and this men will never be brought unto by a bare *Hearing* of *Christs words*. There must be a Vehement striving of a mans *Spirit* and a potent work of *Gods Spirit* upon the *Soul*, before any can be brought to this. Let men hear or read the Counsels, Commands, promises and Threatnings of the *Gospel* never so much, if they be not hereby Excited unto the great *Work* of *Believing*, S. *Joh.* 6. 29. Which is a laying hold of *Gods power*, for the *Cleansing* of us throughly, there is nothing of *Worth* and *Goodness*, which may be a *Foundation* of *outward Love*, and *Esteem* or of *Inward peace* and *hope*. Good *nature* and good *Parts*, good *Morall qualifications* and a fair *profession of Religion* will not serve here.

3*ly*. *Gods peculiar favour*. It is *God* alone who gives *Repute* and *Honour*, who raises *Friends*, that shall be ready to help us, when we stand in need, *When a mans wayes please the Lord, he maketh even his Enemies to be at peace with him. Prov.* 16. 7. It is he who speaketh *True peace* to the *Soul*, he Challenges this as his *Prerogative Isai.* 57. 19. *I create the Fruit of the Lips, Peace, Peace, to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord.* Hence this peace is called the *Peace of God Phil.* 4. 7. *The peace of God, which passeth all Understanding*. And *God*

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the *Author* of it is called the *God of peace*. 1. *Thes.* 5. 23. *The very God of Peace sanctify you wholly. When he giveth quietness, who can make Trouble?* *Job.* 34. 29. It is he, who begets *hope* in his *people*, if any be *Begotten again to a lively hope*, it is by *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his Abundant mercy hath Begotten us again to a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.* He is the *God of hope.* *Rom.* 15. 13. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and Peace.* When the *Lord Roars out of Sion*, all other *hope*, which is not of his Raising, quite fails *Joel.* 3. 16. *The Lord also shall Roar out of Sion, and utter his Voice from Jerusalem, the Heavens and Earth shall shake, but the Lord will be the hope of his People*, we must not Expect then that any of these *Advantages* should last, when we have them only by Gods *Common Providence*, not by his *Peculiar favour*.

Use. Let men please themselves never so much in any *Advantages*, which they make of their *Religion*, beside the proper *Advantages* by it, which are the *Renewing* of the *heart*, the *Reforming* of the *Life*, the *saving* of the *Soul*, the being *United* to *Christ*, *Interested* in him and *Influenced* by him; the being *usefull*

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in their *Places*, *Contented* with their *Conditions*, *Prepared* for all the *Changes* of this *Life*, and the great *Change* at *Death*: If we be not by it brought to *Love*, *Fear*, and *trust* in *God*, more to make *Conscience* of all our *Wayes*, following whatever is *Good*, and Eschewing whatever is *Evil*, there is no *Foundation* laid in us for any durable *Advantage* by *Religion*.

Doct. 3. Whoever in Religious Concerns, Build on the Sand, are but Foolish Builders.

Their Folly will appear, if we consider.

1st. That the *Concernments*, which we have by *Religion* to promote and secure, are the highest *Concernments*, which we either have or can have. They are the *Concernments* of our *Souls*, our better and our more lasting *Part*, what makes for the *purity*, Liberty Glory and felicity of our *Souls*, which are the *Immediate Work-man-ship* of *God*, the *Great purchase* of *Christ Blood*. They are our *Concernments* to *Eternity*, what may make for our *Everlasting* Peace Joy, and Glory; and these are far greater then any of the *Concernments* of this *short uncertain Life* can be. They are such *Concernments* as the *wise God* accounts great, this was the care of *Gods Everlasting Councel*, how to secure these; this was the design of *Christ great undertaking*, to promote these.

2ly.

2ly. The little *provision*, which is made for *Securing* these *Concernments* by such as *Build on the Sand*.

Such *slight work* will nothing *Advantage* the *Soul*. For whatever *Change* is made in the *Outward man* by it, there is none at all made in the *Inward*, the *Soul* it self after all the *Reformation*, which a bare *hearing* makes, remains as poor, as polluted as ever. The *Soul* is still at as great Enmity with the *Holy God*, at as great Distance from the *Blessed God*, in as little Peace with its self, in as great Slavery to its Lusts, as ever. However, if such *Slight work* could *Advantage* the *Soul* for the present, it cannot long *Advantage* it, for it will never last. An *Herb* without its *Root* will soon *wither*, an *House* without its *Foundation* will soon *fall*.

3ly. The *expence* we are at for making this poor *Provision* is great. Those *thoughts* and that *time*, which is laid out about *Hearing*, if they had been wisely managed, might have brought us to the *Obedience* of *Faith*, whereby we might have come to be *Redeemed* from all *Iniquity*, to be *Purified unto God a peculiar People*, and got our *Souls* finally *Saved*: whereas now as we use them only to get a little *Credit*, and to make a little *worldly Advantage* by a *Profession*, to put off the *Rebukes* of *Conscience* a while longer, and to delude our selves with a vain *hope* of *Happiness*, which, unless we be

changed greatly from what we were, we are like to be great *Lofers* by, we lofe *God Chriſt*, and *Heaven*, all theſe *Vtterly* and *Everlaſtingly*.

Uſe. Let us take heed we be not ſuch *Fooliſh Builders*.

1ſt. Leſt we undergo the great *Reproach* of being *Fools*, the greateſt *Fools* of all. For none are ſo great *Fools* as thoſe, who Fool away their *Souls*, and fool themſelves into Hell, in which there is no *Comfort*, out of which there is no *Recovery*. Whatever men think of us for the preſent, they will then know us to be *Fools*, when we have utterly loſt our opportunity of *being ſaved*, and have Ruined our ſelves Irrecoverably. And we our ſelves ſhall call our ſelves *Fools*, and ſhall upbraid our ſelves with, and Curſe our ſelves for our own Folly; when we find and feel what *Miſerable Creatures*, we have made our ſelves to be. And leſt we reap the Bitter *Fruits*, of our *Folly*, being utterly excluded from that Joy, and Glory, which was as ſeriouſly *offered* us, as it is *offered* any, and we were as ſolemnly *invited* to it as any, and we might as certainly have *attained* it as any, had we been but Faithfull to *God* and our own *Souls*; being finally concluded under that Miſery, which we can neither bear nor eſcape.

That we may be wiſe *Builders*, we muſt look well to our *Foundation*, that it be ſolid, and

and that our *Souls* be closely united to it. Let *Christ* be our *Foundation*, and let us take care that we be made one with him.

Doct. 4. *All Buildings in Religion, which are Founded on the Sand, be they never so high and Specious, will fall at last, and the Fall of them will be Great.*

Sometimes *God* suffers them to Fall during this *Life*. Thus it was with *Judas*, who betrayed his *Master*, withdrew himself from the *Society* of the *Disciples*, lost all the *Reputation* he had got by being an *Apostle*, was greatly disquieted in his own *Conscience*, and Killed himself; after he had done much, suffered something, gained some *Repute* among Good men, and probably had some measure of *Peace* in his *Conscience*, and some hope of *Happiness* after *Death*. Thus it was with *Hymeneus*, *Alexander*, and *Philetus*, who though they had *professed the Faith*, and *used a Good Conscience* in many things, and got some *Name* in the *Church*, yet afterwards *fell off* from all. 1. *Tim.* 1. 19. 20. 2. *Tim.* 2. 17. 18. Thus it was with those, who are Resembled to *Stony* and *Thorny Ground*: There is a *hearing of the Word*, and a *receiving it with Joy*, but no good comes of all, either through *Tribulation and Persecution* or through the *Cares and Pleasures of the World*. S. *Matt.* 13. 20. 21. 22. Thus it was with those in *Heb.* 6. Who went far, who had in their

minds *a Great Light*, in their Hearts *a Savoury Taſt*, who came under ſome Powerfull *Work of God*, who were *endowed with the Holy Ghoſt, and taſted Gods Word*; yet theſe are ſuppoſed to *fall away v. 6.* And thoſe who were in ſome Meaſure *Sanctified by the Holy Ghoſt*, and had Received the *Spirit of Grace*, even theſe come to *tread under foot the Son of God*, and to *profane the Blood of the Covenant*. Heb. 10. 29. Thus it was with thoſe in 2. Pet. 2. 20. who had a common *Knowledge* of *Chriſt*, by which they were brought into the *way of Righteouſneſs*, and *eſcaped the Pollutions* and *Entanglements of the world*, and yet afterwards come to be Polluted, and Entangled and overcome, to *turn from the holy Commandment* unto their former Filth.

3. However they fall at *Death*. Then they fall wholly; all the gifts and graces, the good works, Credit and worldly Advantages, their Peace and Hope then fail them, they ſee the *Vanity* of them all, they find no *Comfort* in them, no *help* by them. Sometimes they are made to ſee all this, while they are in a *Condition* to declare it to the *world*, and all about them ſee, that they are Miſerably full of horrour and deſpair: Sometimes they ſee this, before they be quite *Dead*, but they are ſo far gone, that they cannot expreſs the *Anguiſh* they feel. Thoſe ghaſtly looks, and thoſe frightfull ſhrinks, which are to be diſcerned

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in some dying Persons, it is very probable, are not so much the result of Vehement *Pains* of *Body*, as of extream *Anguish* on their *Spirits*, when they are made indeed to see, whither they are going. Sometimes their *Peace* and *Hope* continues untill the very last breath, and their *Amazement* must needs be very *Horrible*, when they feel themselves in *Hell*, before ever they thought of it.

It is certain, all these *Advantages* must come to nothing at *Death*. For

1. Some of them are of that nature, that they are of no use in *another* world, as *Credit* and *worldly advantages*. Those in *Heaven* are so filled with *Joy* and *Glory*, that these are below them. Those in *Hell* are so filled with *anguish* and *horrour*, that if they could have these still, they could not heed them, they would find no *Ease* by them. Even during this *Life* a man in the *Gout*, *Stone* or *Cholick*, may have such Vehement pains upon him, that it will be but poor *Comfort* to hear that he has lived in good *Credit*, has scraped together much *wealth*, or purchased many *Friends*.

2. Some of them are of that Nature, that they Continue not after this *Life*.

Common Grace is but the working of that *Spirit* upon a man, to bring him to *Saving Grace* in the *issue*, or else to keep him

him from doing that miſchief in the World, which otherwiſe he would do: Now there is no uſe of this after Death. *Gifts* are but the *Spirits* working on a man, to Raiſe his *Parts*, that he may be more uſefull to the *Church*: Now the *Spirit* makes no further uſe of a man, after he is called out of this Life.

3*ly*. Some of them are of that *Nature*, that they cannot continue, when the *Truth* is diſcovered, and when *Experience* ſhews the *Vanity* of them, as peace and hope.

God ſuffers them ſometimes to fall here, that thoſe who reſt in them, may take warning not to Content themſelves with that, which may fall, leſt their *Condition* ſhould be as ſad, as theirs is, who fall away.

The *Fall* is Great in it ſelf. It is *Totall*, whatever men have Raiſed to themſelves by their *Religion*, all comes down together. It is *Finall*, the Ruines of this uſually are never raiſed again. If it fall not till *Death*, it is impoſſible to raiſe it, if it fall before, it is difficult. Thoſe who have got into a *Form*, and reſt there, who have had great helps to get further, and have been much a wanting to *God* and their own *Souls*, they have ſinned much againſt *Light* and *Grace*, or elſe they had got further. Vſually their *Fall* is then, when *God* leaves them wholly to themſelves,

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as deſpairing to do any good upon them. Now there is no hope of that *Soul*, which has Triffled away its *Seaſon of grace*, and is now left by *God* unto it ſelf.

The fall is great as to its *Conſequences*. There is great *Amazement* by reaſon of the ſuddenneſs and unexpectedneſs of it. There is great *Horrour*, when all the falſe *Peace* and *Hope* is gone, there is then nothing but *a fearfull Looking for of Judgement, and fiery Indignation. Heb.* 10. 27.

Uſe. 1. We ſhould be greatly afraid, leſt what we *Build* ſhould *fall* alſo, and thereby we be put to great *Shame* to *Build* ſo *Fooliſhly*, when we ſhould be *Building for Eternity*. Thereby we come to great loſs, we loſe our *Souls*, we undergo unſpeakable, unconceivable *Miſcheif*, which we can neither bear up under, nor run away from. The way to avoid this *falling* is, to make uſe of *Common grace* in order to the getting of *Saving grace*; to preſs through the *Form* of *Religion* to the *power* of it; to nouriſh in our ſelves Apprehenſions of the *Danger* of reſting in ſuch Attainments, as we may utterly and everlaſtingly *fall away* from; to be frequently enquiring, what we have attained to in *Religion*, which theſe *Temporary Chriſtians* came ſhort of; to be earneſt with God in Prayer, that he would not ſuffer us to reſt in ſuch common Attainments, as

we may wholly loſe during this Life, or ſuch as we ſhall never be *Advantaged* by, when we come to die.

Uſe. 2. The greater the *Fall* is, let us be the more afraid of it, and bend our *Endeavours*, and *Prayers* ſo that we may eſcape it. The nearer we come to *Heaven*, the deeper ſhall we be plunged into *Hell*, if we come ſhort of *Heaven*.

Iſaiah.

Iſaiah 55. 6.

Seek ye the Lord, while he may be Found, Call ye upon him, while he is Near.

THeſe words under a different Aſpect may admit of a different Conſtruction: View them on one ſide, and they ſeem to lay before us an *Exhortation* to a great *Duty*, with a *Direction* how this may be moſt advantageouſly Diſcharged. The Duty Exhorted to is the Doing the utmoſt that in us lieth for the *Finding of God*. The *Rules* directing how to manage this *Duty* aright, preſcribe, that this be ſet about

1ſt. *Diligently*. Men ordinarily, when they find and feel great need of the *Guidance* and *Aſſiſtance* of ſome Perſon of eminent *Prudence* and *Power*, whom they have high *hopes* of, do not content themſelves with *Idle Wiſhes*, neither do they lazily ſit down, vainly Expecting that he ſhould *deſignedly come* to them,

of that they ſhould *Accidentally meet* with him in good time. No, but they conſider with themſelves, where is the Place of his uſual Reſidence or Reſort, and thither they forthwith betake themſelves to ſeek him out; and if haply they do not find him, where they Expected, they go about calling and enquiring after him, till at laſt they find him. With ſuch *Care* and *Diligence* muſt thoſe ſeek, who deſire and hope to find God.

2ly. *Speedily.* Men, if they know that one, whoſe help they greatly need, cannot be found at all times, let never ſo much *Care* and *Diligence* be uſed in ſeeking him, will not dare to put off one *moment* their ſeeking and calling upon him; conſidering with themſelves, that for any thing they know, that may be the only *Moment*, wherein the Perſon needed may be found; which *Opportunity* if they let ſlip, they may be at abundance of *Coſt* and *Toil* in ſeeking him and all to no purpoſe. Now thoſe that would *find God*, muſt ſet about this great work of *ſeeking him* with as little Procraſtination.

View the Words on the other ſide, and they ſeem to ſet forth to us an *Exhortation* to this *Duty*, with an *Excitation*, *Inducement*, and *Encouragement* faithfully to ſet about it. Let a Buſineſs be of never ſo great *Importance*, men will but ſlackly apply themſelves to it, if they either doubt of the *Profitableneſs* of it, tho

tho' it ſhould be effected, or the *Feaſableneſs* of it, that it ever will be effected. Therefore to excite men to do their utmoſt for *finding of God*, he lets them know

1*ſt*. *The Advantage*, which will certainly accrue, if *God* be but once *Found*, he being *THE LORD*, he having not only a *Right* of *Dominion* over all Perſons and affairs, but a Right of *Propriety* in them: Now what may not men expect from this *LORD*, who hath all, Ruleth all, and doth all, if by *finding* him they have attained to be in Favour with him, and to have his Preſence with them?

2*ly*. *The Poſſibility, nay Probability* of *finding god*, if he be but duly *ſought*. Were God not at all to be found, or were he at ſuch a *vaſt Diſtance* from us, that he could not be found without a very Tedious *Inquiſition*, we might hereby ſomewhat excuſe our *ſloth* in neglecting to *ſeek* him. But when he may be found, and that without going very far, he being ſo near us, it is a *Madneſs* to loſe him for want of a little ſeeking after him.

I ſhall comprehend the ſubſtance of the Text in this brief, but full Propoſition.

It is the Duty *and Concern of all to ſeek the Lord while he may be found, to call upon him while he is near.*

I ſay, all are obliged and concerned thus to do, for the Precept and Exhortation is Generall, extending to all Sexes, Ages, and Con-

ditions of men, that are without God: unleſs we can imagine that there are ſome without God, that need him not, but can be well enough without him, although the *Apoſtle* repreſenteth this as the height of the *Miſery* of an *Unregenerate Perſon*, that he is *without God in the World. Ephes.* 2. 12.

The Foregoing Propoſition implieth

1ſt. That men in their *Naturall Condition*, are ſo *without God*, as not to find him without *ſeeking*. They are at a Remote diſtance from God, not as to *Place*, that being utterly impoſſible, (for he who fills *Heaven* and *Earth* with his *Immenſe Eſſence*, cannot but be intimately preſent with every *Soul*) but as to *State*. For the Bent of their Hearts being directly contrary to the *Divine nature* and Will, they are no more capable of admitting the gracious *Influences* of God, than a Lump of Clay can take in the Light of the Sun, tho' it ſhine never ſo bright round about it. But this is not all the Wretchedneſs of an *Unregenerate Condition*, for men in that *Eſtate* are not only without *God*, who is the only Originall of their Life and Comforts, the only Foundation of their Hopes, but are alſo *Ignorant* where to find him: If they underſtood but how to go Directly to *God*, they would not need long to ſeek him. And this is one of the Bittereſt Fruits of the Originall Apoſtacy of our firſt Parents, which has been continued and

and increaſed by our Actuall Tranſgreſſions. It is the Root of all thoſe Extreme Miſchiefs, which follow Sin, either as Naturall Conſequences of it, or Penall Chaſtiſements for it: Whatever we at any time complain of, may be juſtly Imputed to this. *Iſa.* 59. 2. *Your Iniquities of have Separated between you and your God, and your ſins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*

2*ly.* That men, while without God, and thus at a diſtance from him, do greatly and Extremely ſtand in need of God, and can in no wiſe be without him. Were it not for this, we ſhould hear of no Commands iſſued out from God, for the enjoyning men to ſeek him. For the good and wiſe God, although his *Supremacy* be unqueſtionable, yet he Loves not to Act Arbitrarily, merely for the Oſtentation of his *Power*, but he is induced to Act by the Conſideration of ſome Holy, Righteous and good End, which he would Promote. Now this End cannot refer to himſelf, for the infinite, ever Bleſſed, allſufficient God, the *Lord* of *Heaven* and *Earth*, is utterly uncapable of any Addition to himſelf: It muſt therefore be the Conveniences and Neceſſities of poor Sinfull man, that God conſults in the giving out of his Commands. When God therefore ſayes to man *Seek me*; we may aſſure our ſelves, that we have need ſo to do, God knows we have need. Poſſibly Fooliſh man

may have other Conceits in his head, while with Children he pleases himself in Toyes; but when once with the *Prodigal* he comes to himself, being awakened out of his pleasing Dream, by a sight of Sin, fear of Gods wrath, and the Law's curse; by a sense of Judgements, Especially such as Afflict the Body, or affright with black Apprehensions of *Death*, or deprive of those Lower Comforts, which are most set by; then he clearly discerns and sensibly Experiences the *Vanity* and *Vexation* of whatever is besides and below God, and thereby Learns, that the *Satisfaction* he so much needs, is no where to be expected, but in God only.

3*ly*. That men, notwithstanding the need they stand in of God, are very backward to seek him. Men will not be induced to seek God by the fairest *Invitations*, and the most earnest *Entreaties*, they must be in a manner compelled to seek God by strict *Commands* and severe *Threatnings*. God would spare those, did he not see, that there would be no seeking him without them; nay, Experience shews, that all these will scarce do, for men seldome seek God in good earnest, till the Incessant *Judgements* of God do as it were drive them out of their Sins, their Earthly Comforts and themselves unto God. This is one great piece of the Misery of an *Apostate State*, that men are senseless of it, and so do not concern themselves to seek unto him, who only can

save

ſave from it; like men in *High Feavers*, who greatly need the Help of a *Phyſitian*, yet being in raging *Phrenſies*, they as much deſpiſe and reject it, as being altogether unapprehenſive of their own Danger. Men are generally ſo averſe from ſeeking God, that the *Apoſtle* obſerves out of *Scripture*, that there *are none that ſeek after God*, and he imputes it to this, that *they underſtand not*. *Rom.* 3. 11. Alaſs! they know not their *Want* of *God*, they feel not their need of God, they underſtand not the *worth* of God; they have ſeverall things to make *Gods* of to themſelves to pleaſe themſelves in. The *God of this World* blinds them, that they ſee not their *Godleſs Condition*, he hardens them, that they feel it not, and holds them, that they ſtir not out of it. *The Luſts of the Fleſh & the World* find them ſeverall other things to ſeek beſides God, whom they moſt need.

4*ly*. That God may be Found, if duly and Timely ſought. While one obſerves what Groſs neglect there is of God in the *World*, how few ſeek him, and that men are for the moſt part wholly intent upon the Purſuit of other things, he has *Temptations* to conceit, that ſurely *God* is not at all to be found, otherwiſe men would not be ſo deſperately mad, as never to concern themſelves about ſeeking him, ſeing without him they cannot but be *utterly* and *Everlaſtingly undone* without

without *Remedy*. But this ſtrange Careleſſneſs of God is rather the Reſult of their *Senſeleſſneſs* of the need they ſtand in of God, than of their *Deſpair* of finding him. For the *God of Truth* would never have commanded and Encouraged men to ſeek him, if in ſeeking they were likely to loſe their Labour. No, he Never ſaid, neither to the *Seed of Jacob*, nor to the *Seed of Adam*, *ſeek ye me in Vain*. *Iſa*. 45. 19. The Condition of loſt man would be very deplorable, if that *God*, in whoſe *Enjoyment* his *Happineſs* conſiſts, could in no wiſe be found; The Undertaking of *Chriſt* alſo would be altogether in vain, whatever he he has done or ſuffered, even that Painfull, ſhamefull, Execrable *Death* upon the *Croſs* would be wholly to no Purpoſe, if men could not be brought to God ſo as to find him, for S. *Peter* tells us this was the great End of all, *That he might bring us unto God*. S. *Pet*: 3. 18. Doubtleſs then God may be Found, if he be but Sought

1. *Duly*, If men ſeek him out of a feeling ſenſe of their want & need of him, and out of a ſincere deſire to find him; if they diligently enquire after him, faithfully follow the *guide*, which leads to him, and carefully uſe the *means*, whereby he is drawn nigh unto. He hath promiſed *Jer*. 29. 13. *Ye ſhall ſeek me and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your Heart*. Which is as true of Gods readineſs

readineſs to be found when rightly ſought, to deliver from the *Bondage of Sin*, as from the Captivity of *Babylon*.

2*ly*. God muſt be ſought *timely*, *while he may be found*, before the Proper ſeaſon of finding him be over. *Prov.* 8. 17. *Thoſe that ſeek me early, ſhall find me*. For

The *fifth* thing implied in the *Propoſition* is, that the Time of finding God by ſeeking him will not always laſt. And

1*ſt*. It will certainly be ended at *Death*. Indeed there is a *Preſence* of *God*, according to which he will be found after Death unſought for and undeſired; A Terrible furious preſence, which fills the *Conſcience* of the *Impenitent Sinner* with a ſenſe of Guilt and wrath, and his heart with anguiſh and Horror, Perplexity and Deſpair: It is this *Preſence*, which kindles *That fire, that ſhall never be Quenched*, and which ſo affrights the greateſt and ſtouteſt, that they are not able to abide it, but *Call to the Mountains and Rocks to fall on them, and hide them from it. Rev.* 6 16. When the *Soul* is once ſeparated from this *Lumpiſh Body*, which ſtraitens its Capacities and dulls its ſenſes, and greatly unfits it for Converſe with any thing but this Groſs world: then it comes immediately to have to do with God himſelf, whom it has ſo much deſpiſed and hated; and his *preſence* they can in no wiſe poſſibly avoid, although by reaſon of the

Contrariety,

Contrariety, which is between *Gods nature* and theirs, it be extremely Tormenting to them, like a fire that doth continually ſcorch. *Iſa.* 33. 14. *Who among us ſhall dwell with Everlaſting Burnings?*

But as for the *Amiable and Gracious Preſence* of God, that Preſence, which the Soul needeth and deſireth, with which it is ſo refreſhed and raviſhed, this if it be not ſought here, can never be found hereafter. After Death the ſtate of the Soul is unalterable; it is with men then, as it was with the *Devils* immediately after their Fall, their Wills are Immurably fixed to their former Choice, ſo that thoſe who will not ſeek God now, cannot then; There is no ſuch *Work* as *ſeeking in the Grave, whither we go.* Beſides, if there could be any ſeeking God after death, there could be no finding him then, ſeing there is then a *Vaſt Gulf fixt between God and Sinfull Souls*, S. *Luke.* 16. 25. The *Romaniſts*, who ſuppoſe a *Purgatory* after death, and a ſeeking and finding God out of *Purgatory*, only aſſign this *Purgatory* for thoſe in the *ſtate* of *grace*, who have been ſincerely ſeeking God during this Life, but have not found him, being not ſufficiently purified, and ſo not prepared for him.

2*ly.* It may poſſibly be ended during Life. There are thoſe, who have outlived the day of *Grace*, in which God offers himſelf to be found.

Thus

Thus it was with *Pharoah*, whom God after the ſixth Plague reſerved alive, till he ſhould have a more ſeaſonable opportunity for the Glorifying of himſelf in his deſtruction. Thus it was alſo with *Judas*, of whom *Chriſt* gave this Character ſome time before his death, that he was a *Devil*. S. *Joh.* 6. 70. A Devil, not only for the Wickedneſs of his heart, but alſo for the deſperateneſs of his ſtate, Devils might as ſoon find God as he. There are thoſe who, while alive, ſin the *Sin unto Death*. S. *John*. 5. 19. Oppoſing the Spirit of God ſo obſtinately and contumaciouſly in its ſaving work, that at laſt it fully and finally Reſolves to leave them to themſelves to go on to their own Deſtruction. God can never be found, but when he ſets himſelf to be found, ſaying, *Behold me, Behold me*. *Iſa*. 65. 1. Nay, while he himſelf *Seeks his Servants*. *Pſal*. 119. 176. And this is only ſo long as there is any Hopes, that a Sinner may be Reclaimed by any *Methods* of *Grace*, which Gods Wiſdome and Juſtice will allow to be uſed towards him. But if after a Tryail of all theſe, in ſpight of Inſtructions and Reproofs, of mercy and Judgement, of what God can do mediately by his *Miniſters* and of what God thinks fit to do immediately by his *Holy Spirit*, the Sinner perſiſt obſtinately and Incorrigibly in neglecting and rejecting of God, God ſaith of him, as he ſaid of *Ephraim*

Hoſ.

Hoſ. 4. 17. *He is joyned to Idols, let him alone.* I ſee he will have none of me, and I am reſolved he ſhall not. And let me tell you, this is one of the greateſt Judgements a ſinner is capable of on this ſide Hell, to be herein by God Iudicially condemned to his own ſinfull choice. After this there can be no ſeeking God ſo as to find him, let a man live never ſo long.

Having ſhewn you thoſe things, that were implied in the firſt *Propoſition*, I come now to the *Propoſition* it ſelf, and ſhall ſhew you, *That it is the Duty and Concern of all to ſeek God, ſo as to find him.*

It is their *Duty*, for

1*ſt.* It is the *Precept* of God, whom we ought to obey, *Pſal.* 25. 4. *Seek ye the Lord and his ſtrength: Seek his face evermore.*

2. It is the *Practiſe* of the *Saints*, whom we ought to imitate. *This is the Generation of them, that ſeek him Pſal.* 24. 6. It need not be Explained, whom God ſpeaks to *Iſa.* 51. 1. *Ye that ſeek the Lord*, for it is to them, that *follow after Righteouſneſs.*

3. The *Promiſes* of God encourage to it, and they ought not to be ſlighted: The *Promiſe* aſſures us, that we *Shall find God, if we ſearch for him with all our heart. Jer.* 26. 13. And together with him every good thing beſides. *Pſal.* 34. 10. *They that ſeek the Lord, ſhall not want any good thing.*

4. The

4. The *Providences* of God call to this, and they ought to be complied with. *Mercies* are therefore vouchsafed to men to this purpose. God hath set men *The bounds of their habitations, that they should seek the Lord. Act.* 17. 46. 27. Judgements are inflicted for this purpose; upon this account God ill resents it, that *People turn not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts. Isa.* 9. 13. And so in a manner baffle him by their perverseness in a most gracious design.

5. This is the design of *Christs* undertakings, wherein he should not be Frustrated. *Christ* became *EMMANUEL, God with us*, that God might be in us: He assumed the Humane nature, that we might be Partakers of the Divine, which cannot be without our finding God. *He suffered for sins that he might bring us unto God.* 1. *Pet:* 3. 18. The Bloud of Christ was for making *those that were a far off, nigh unto God. Ephe.* 2. 13. Which cannot be without seeking him.

It is their *Concern* also, for

1*st*. If men find God, in him they will find two great *Advantages*, which they will but in vain seek for any where else. These are,

1*st*. *Salvation* from evil things, as lust, sin with all the Mischevous Consequences of it, Gods wrath, the Laws Curse, the Miseries of this life, the Terrours of Death, and the Torments

Torments of *Hell*. From evil Persons, Enemies without, as wicked men and cruel Devils, the great enemy within, our Carnall selves. In all these cases it is palpably evident, that *Salvation belongeth unto the Lord*, Psal. 3. 8.

2*ly*. *Satisfaction* in God. The *Soul* was made for God at the first, and only God can fit it and fill it, answering its vast Capacities, and fulfilling its numerous desires: Whatever is besides and below God all worldly Enjoyments are unsuitable to a *Soul*, which is Spirituall; unproportionable to a *Soul*, which is immense & Eternall. Without God himself there cannot be that *peace of God, which passeth all understanding*, Phil. 4. 7. There will not be that *Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*, that *Fullness of Joy*, which only is in *Gods presence*. Psal. 16. 11.

2*ly*. If men finally miss of *finding God*.

1*st*. They sustain great loss, their Souls will be lost, the most noble and durable part of man, the immediate workmanship of Gods hands, the purchase of Christs Bloud, which is of more value then many worlds, will be utterly and Irrecoverably lost. Not that it will cease to be, but it will be so miserable, that it had better never have been: It will be an extream Burden to its self, being without God; for it can never possibly enjoy it self, if it find not God.

2*ly*.

2*ly*. *Heaven* will be loſt, and all the joyes and Glories of it. There is no being in *Heaven* without God, who makes the main of *Heaven*, into which men enter not ſo much by changing their place, as by changing their ſtate.

3*ly*. Their *Lives* will be unprofitable, they will live like Brutes, or Devils, and want the honour, and pleaſure of doing ſervice to God, and good to themſelves, and their brethren, being Bleſſings to the places where they are caſt. Without finding God no good will be got or done, *for without him we can do nothing*. S *John*. 15. 5. It is he, who works all our good works in us and for us.

4*ly*. Their *Death* will be terrible. When men are about breathing out their laſt, their Friends weeping and mourning over them, but not able to Comfort or help them; unleſs they be ſtupid and ſenſeleſs, what horrour and anguiſh muſt they needs be in then, if they have *God* to ſeek, when they are quite leaving the world and all its delights, wherein they have ſo much pleaſed themſelves, and when they are entring into an *Eternity* of *Woes* and *Miſeries*? Alaſs! They cannot ſay with *David*. *Pſal*. 23. 4. *Though I walk through the Valley of the ſhadow of Death I will fear no Evill: For thou art with me*.

5*ly*. *Hell* will be altogether unavoidable, the Horrours & torments whereof are unſpeakable, unconceivable, and unſupportable, being to con-

tinue unto all *Eternity*, without Remiſſion or Intermiſſion. The *Soul* once out of the *Body*, if without God, needs no other *Hell* than what it Carries about with it: For then it will be continually upbraiding it ſelf with its ſin, and folly, and its own deſires will Torture it by their Eager and Impetuous Cravings, which are never like to meet with the leaſt ſatisfaction.

Uſe. 1. *Expoſtulation.* 1*ſt.* Why do we not what we may, and ought, yea, and muſt do unleſs we reſolve to be extremely & endleſſly miſerable? What! have we found God already? It is well, if we have. But let me tell you there are not many, that have found him, neither is he ſoon and eaſily found: and Men have no reaſon to preſume, that they have found *God*, unleſs they have uncontroulable *Evidences*, that they have found him. Thou, who ſayeſt, thou haſt found God, what Extraordinary Wiſdome and Grace and Comfort haſt thou to Demonſtrate, that *God is in thee of a Truth?*

2*ly.* Is he not worth ſeeking? If he be not, he invites us to our loſs, when he calls on us to ſeek him. And good men have all along been very *Fools*, who have imployed their time ſo unprofitably, if men may do well enough, when they come to die, though their *Souls* have nothing to live on, for they are like to Enjoy the world no longer.

If

If happineſs, everlaſting happineſs be worth ſeeking, God is; for only by finding *God*, we are like to find that.

3*ly*. Do we expect to find him without ſeeking? We may expect and ſee what will come of it. But if we miſs God, it will be in vain to wiſh we had ſought him, when the time of ſeeking him is over: And it will be little Comfort to us, when we feel our ſelves miſerable beyond all Expreſſion for want of *God*, to ſay, we thought we might have found him without *ſeeking*. And what grounds have we for ſuch Expectations? Did we ever know any that found God without *ſeeking*? Or do the *Scriptures* mention any way of finding God without *ſeeking*? Or have we heard from any, that are come to God, that they know any other way?

Uſe. 2. *Exhortation*. Let us all ſet about this *work*, which we are ſo much obliged to and concerned in, which is the main important buſineſs of our Lives, and which when we come to die, we ſhall all wiſh we had wholly applyed our ſelves unto all along. Pair let us ſet about it forthwith, or elſe we ſhall incur ſeverall *Hazards*, which few in their *Wits* would venture upon in matters of far leſs moment. We ſay, we will in good earneſt ſet about *ſeeking God*, after ſuch a time, when we have diſpatched ſuch a Buſineſs, or Enjoyed ſuch a pleaſure. But how if that time never come?

Thou in the mean time being ſnatched away by ſuddain Death, as many are unexpectedly in the midſt of their health and ſtrength? Suppoſe the time come, and thou haſt no *leiſure*, being preſſed by the importunity of *Friends* to ſettle thy *Worldly affaires*, and to make proviſion for thy Wife and Children. How if, though thou ſhouldeſt have never ſo much *Leiſure*, yet thou haſt no ſuch *Compoſure*, as a buſineſs of ſuch weight, which will take up a mans whole thoughts, doth require? Is a man in due *Temper* of mind for *ſeeking God*, when he is fit for nothing elſe, his mind being inwardly Diſtracted with *cares* about his Temporall concernes, and *feares* of Death, and outwardly diſturbed with the *Lamentations*, and *diſcourſes* of thoſe about him? How if thou ſhouldeſt want neither *leiſure*, nor *Bodily Health* and *ſtrength*, and yet want *underſtanding*? Are not many in their life time become very Sots? Are not ſome Diſtracted with *Madneſs* or *Melancholy*? Some before Death ſmitten with ſtupid *lethargies*, or raging *Phrenſies*? Now are ſuch as thoſe in any Tolerable Capacity for *ſeeking God*? What if thou ſhouldeſt want a *will* to ſeek *God*, at that time, which thou propoſeſt to thy ſelf to do this in? If nothing elſe be a wanting, this will be enough to hinder thee from doing any thing to purpoſe herein. Now when thy *will* is already ſo averſe from this

neceſſary

neceſſary *work*, is it likely it ſhould be more inclinable to *ſeek God*, when longer *Cuſtome* in ſin has further perverted it, worldly *Affaires* have more Entangled it, fleſhly *pleaſures* have more inveagled it, *Satans Cunning* and *power* has more inſlaved it? How if thou neither wanteſt *will*, nor any of the forementioned Requiſites for *ſeeking God*, and yet want *power* to do it to purpoſe? If *God* has given over *ſeeking* thee, thou canſt not *ſeek him*. Once thou hadſt *Providences*, and *Ordinances*, and mighteſt have had the *Influences* of Gods *Spirit* to excite thee to, and to direct and aſſiſt thee in *ſeeking God*, but thou wouldeſt not make uſe of them, and now *God* is reſolved, thou ſhalt have no more offers of any ſuch help. You ſee then ſuch a *Reſolution* of putting off the *ſeeking of God* for a while is very unſafe.

It is alſo very unmeet, and inconvenient: If thou wert never ſo ſure, that thou couldeſt afterwards *ſeek God* ſo as to find him, yet by delaying to do ſo now, thou art like to be a *loſer*; for the longer thou puttoſt off *ſeeking God*, the later thou wilt find him, and ſo in the mean time thou wilt be deprived of all thoſe gifts, graces, and Comforts, wherewith *God* once found, would have enriched, adorned, and refreſhed thee.

Moreover it is to be feared, that ſuch a *Reſolution* is unſound, how plauſible ſo ever it

it ſeems. Men often pretend, they will ſeek *God*, when they intend nothing leſs, but only uſe this *pretence* as a ſpecious *Excuſe* for their not *ſeeking God* for the preſent, thereby to ſtop the *Clamour* of their own *Conſcience*, which, ſo long as it is *awake*, will be very frequently and ſharply reproving them for their groſs *Negligence* in a buſineſs of ſo great importance.

Thou, who ſayeſt, thou wilt ſeek God hereafter, if thou doſt not ſay this meerly out of *Form*, but haſt a real deſign to perform it, and doſt verily believe, that *God* is worth *finding*, why doſt thou not forthwith ſet about this *Work* of *ſeeking* him? For thou haſt now the ſame *Motives* and *Inducements* to excite thee to ſeek him, and the ſame or rather greater *Opportunities*, *Helps* and *Aſſiſtances* of *Gods Spirit*, than thou canſt ever expect to have at any *Future Time* which thou canſt propoſe to thy ſelf. For the longer thou continueſt in a *Sinfull Courſe*, the more thou wilt *grieve the Holy Spirit*, and the more thou wilt be hardened in *Sin*, and ſo make thy *Finding* of *God* the more difficult.

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